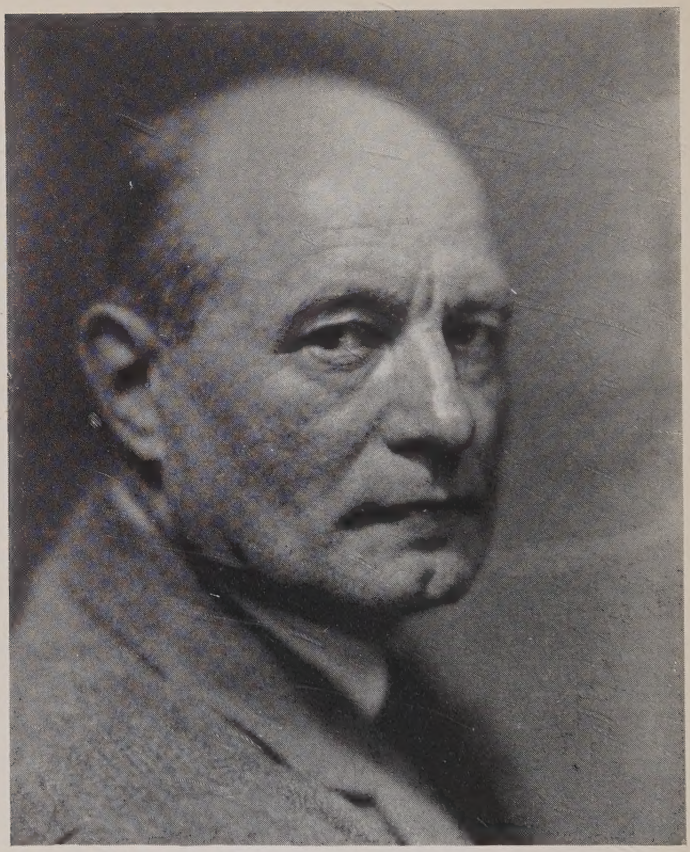
PLAYS
PLAYERS
PLAYHOUSES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/playsplayersplay0000irma



FERMIN GÉMIER

Director, Théatre National de l'Odéon and Founder of Internationale Société Theatrale

PLAYS PLAYERS PLAYHOUSES

INTERNATIONAL DRAMA OF TODAY

BY

IRMA KRAFT

WITH FOREWORDS BY
EVA LE GALLIENNE
AND GEORGE ARLISS

PN
1861
K7

NEW YORK
GEORGE DOBSEVAGE
MCMXXVIII

OHIO UNIVERSITY
WITHDRAWN
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY IRMA KRAFT

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO MY FATHER

THE PRINCIPAL PLAYER IN THE
DRAMA OF MY LIFE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express her gratitude for information and inspiration to M. Fermin Gémier of the "Théatre National de l'Odéon," Paris, to Mr. John Galsworthy of London, to M. Jacinto Benavente of Madrid and to Mr. Walter Hasenclever of Berlin. Also to Miss Eva Le Gallienne and to Mr. George Arliss for their good wishes. To the Theatre Guild, the Provincetown, the American Laboratory, and the New Playwrights; to the Theatre Arts Magazine, to Miss Jane Cowl and Miss Pauline Lord for photographs. And to the many kindly and thoughtful people in many lands who have given me access to dramatists and their dramas.

Irma Kraft.

"God conceived the world—that was Poetry
He formed it—that was Sculpture
He colored it—that was Painting
He peopled it with Living Beings
That was—Eternal Drama."

CUSHMAN

CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY EVA LE GALLIENNE		XV
INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE ARLISS		XVII
I	POST-WAR EUROPE	1
II	INSURGENT AMERICA	4
III	EGYPT—THE INSCRUTABLE	10
IV	CHINA—THE ANCESTRAL	17
V	JAPAN—THE ELUSIVE	24
VI	RUSSIA—THE PASSIONATE	33
VII	SPAIN—THE SYMBOLIST	50
VIII	ITALY—THE MENTAL GYMNAST	63
IX	NORWAY—THE STOIC	75
X	AUSTRIA—THE AESTHETE	84
XI	GERMANY—THE ANALYST	94
XII	FRANCE—THE SUBTLE	101
XIII	HOLLAND AND BELGIUM—THE STATIC	120
XIV	SWITZERLAND—THE BOURGEOISE	127
XV	ENGLAND—THE CONSERVATIVE	129
XVI	IRELAND—THE REBELLIOUS	146
XVII	THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL	152

XVIII	THE BAVARIAN FESTIVAL	160
XIX	THE MADGEBURG EXHIBITION	163
XX	THE YIDDISH ART THEATRE AND "THE HABIMA"	170
XXI	NEGRO DRAMA	177
XXII	THE UNITED STATES—THE ADOLESCENT	183
XXIII	THE LITTLE THEATRE MOVEMENT	198
XXIV	THE THEATRE GUILD	202
XXV	THE AMERICAN LABORATORY THEATRE	206
XXVI	PROVINCETOWN PLAYHOUSE AND THE NEW PLAYWRIGHT'S THEATRE	217
XXVII	THE CIVIC REPERTORY THEATRE	224
XXVIII	THEATRES	228
XXIX	STAGING	235
XXX	AUDIENCES	245
XXXI	ACTORS	254

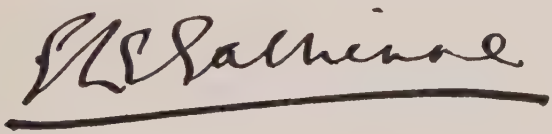
ILLUSTRATIONS

FERMIN GÉMIER	FRONTIS.
SEMIRAMIS THEATRE IN CAIRO	16
CHINESE MALE ACTORS OF TODAY	17
CHINESE MAT THEATRE	23
SCENES FROM MODERN JAPANESE PROBLEM PLAYS	28
SCENES FROM JAPANESE NŌ PLAYS	29
MAIERHOLD'S CONSTRUCTIVIST THEATRE	42
MAIERHOLD'S "HEDDA GABLER"	42
LETTER OF JACINTO BENAVENTE	55
CATALINA BÁRCENA	62
ERNESTO VILCHES	62
SCENE FROM "LA CENA DELLE BEFFE"	63
"THE JEST" BY SAM BENELLI	63
"JOHN GABRIEL BJORKMAN"	80
"MICHAEL KRAMER" BY HAUPTMANN	92
"THE MACHINE WRECKERS" BY ERNST TOLLER	92
"THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"	93
LETTER OF FERMIN GÉMIER	105
THÉÂTRE DE VIEUX COLOMBIER	118
"MAYA" BY SIMON GANTILLON	118
"THE GOOD HOPE" BY HEYERMANS	119

LETTER OF JOHN GALSWORTHY 137
NICHOLAS HANNEN 142
JOHN GALSWORTHY 142
"THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS" BY SEAN O'CASEY 143
THE PLAYERS FROM "THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" 156
"PERIPHERY" BY FRANCIZEK LANGER 156
"MEEK MOSE" BY EDWARD WILSON 182
"IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM" BY PAUL GREEN 182
GEORGE ARLISS 183
EUGENE O'NEILL 183
"MARCO MILLIONS" BY EUGENE O'NEILL 204
"PORGY" BY DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD 204
"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING" 216
"THE PRISONER" BY EMIL BERNHARD 217
"THE CENTURIES" BY EM JO BASSHE 217
EVA LE GALLIENNE 224
"CRADLE SONG" BY MARTINEZ SIERRA 225
NEUE FREIE VOLKSBÜHNE, BERLIN 230
THEATER IN DER KÖNIGGRÄTZERSTRASSE, BERLIN 230
THE GUILD THEATRE, NEW YORK 231
TWO SETTINGS FOR "MACBETH" 244
JANE COWL 245
LYNN FONTANNE 245
PAULINE LORD 245

FOREWORD

This book of Irma Kraft's seems to me to fill a very definite need. I know of no other book that covers such a wide and varied field, giving one such a clear picture of International Theatre Life. Irma Kraft is peculiarly fitted, through her burning enthusiasm and love for Theatre, her keen vital mind and quick insight, for this work which has been for her a true labor of love.



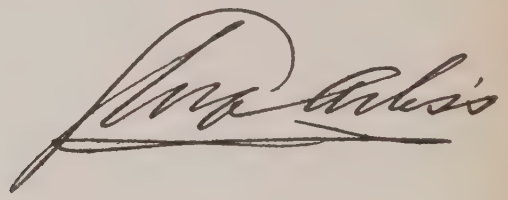
INTRODUCTION

There is only one reason why I regret being an actor, and that is that I cannot have the theatre as a hobby apart from my routine of business. The love of the theatre is in the very heart of the great majority of people, and I can imagine no more delightful recreation than the study of the drama from its most intimate subtleties far out to its broadest fields.

The plays of any age are for the most part the reflection of the manners and customs of the period and the country in which they are written. As nations become more closely related to one another—and they surely must with the advance of science leading to still more rapid intercourse—a study of the drama of the world cannot but develop a fuller understanding of the peoples of the world. Irma Kraft is one of the few writers who has made an intensive study of the drama of many nations drawn from her own observation. Her impressions are not the result of mere superficial knowledge. They are the outcome of years of study during which time she

has lived in a number of the countries of which she writes.

I believe that there is great value in this survey of the theatres of the world and in this book an earnest effort has been made towards understanding and reviewing dramatic development in many lands; a development which includes dramas, dramatists, actors, and audiences.



PLAYS
PLAYERS
PLAYHOUSES

I: POST-WAR EUROPE

Drama begins anew with each sunrise. Since the midnight of the War, a new world has dawned—cut off from dramatic heritage—creating its own rules to fit the new conditions of existence. "Sunrise in the West" must bring with it, its own mirror to reflect the conditions born of the urgency of the moment. The stress of today's turmoil forges its own laws and scraps, with fierce fury, the dramatic technique of yesterday. It is only when we begin to realize the value and the valor of today—that we also realize the need of cutting our dramatic costumes to fit these new born needs.

* * * * * * *

The theatre of a nation should reflect its people —their lives and thoughts and actions. It should concern itself with the actors on the stage, in the audience, and behind the scenes. The drama of a nation must be born of its body and its soul. The warp and woof of all the humans concerned in it. Because we in the Western world are too prone to relegate the theatre to our leisure hours, we have not yet learned to assign it to its proper place. Until we can learn to interweave it into our lives as in the

endless "*Nō*" plays of Japan, or the everlasting dramas of old China—until we can learn to thread it into the permanent tapestry of our existence, we shall not have learned its true value. Until we have learned what it means to make its vital issues our vital issues, to acknowledge that it must hold the mirror up to those thoughts which float on the inner stream of our unspoken consciousness, we shall not have reached the more important regions of dramatic thought.

Let us ramble, then, into the theatres of other lands. Enigmatic Egypt, barely breaking into form—impressive Norway—vitriolic Italy—pulsating Spain. Let us go to farthest Japan and try to trace the links of this barely perceptible dramatic chain around the far-flung corners of the earth.

Man was born to mime—to try to vocalize the dark and silent places of his soul. Man was born to self-expression, to tell the story of his experiments; successful or otherwise. Let us realize then—that the drama of tomorrow dare not halt at experiment in *any* form—lest it perish. That we must be willing to break up act form, scene form, to hack and hew at *all* form until the story of the play comes into ultimate harmony with life itself. This must be the mission of the drama: to pour, hot and molten, the artist's interpretation of life as he sees it; to pour it movingly over all our hearth-stones. To creep

into dark alley-ways where Glory passes unnoticed; to steal into courts whose pomp has long since frazzled out in painted passion; to glide into brothels where Passion has long since sunk into hopeless greed. All of this must be the task of the dramatist of today and tomorrow.

Above all, to point with the white torch of truth to the thing that he has come to know as life; to hold the torch high and unfalteringly; to know that he dare not hesitate before the scene, be it beautiful or hideous. To know above all, that he must wallow in life, to reveal that life to others still unborn.

The theatre is perhaps the most important pause in our lives. Hence, my excuse, if one be needed, in asking you to loiter with me in the playhouses of many lands, where, since the War—dramatic art has been peering, questioning, stealing up crazy tenement staircases—stealing up to God.

II: INSURGENT AMERICA

America has gone a long distance from the smug sophistication of Bronson Howard, Augustus Thomas and Clyde Fitch to the symbolism of Eugene O'Neill, and the rebellion of John Howard Lawson. And all of this in less than forty years!

In forty years we have advanced to the highest peak of production in World Drama. Our scenic sets, the splendor of our staging, is unparalleled. Yet the outer, glossy, veneer, the wealth of our stage trappings, in no way disguises the paucity of much of our subject matter nor the insurgency of our aims.

We want to do the "most magnificent," gorgeous and overwhelming, productions in the world. We want to startle, amaze, stupefy. Not so much by the clear and poignant quality of our thinking as by the quantity and the glitter of our productions.

Only in rare instances—O'Neill, Green, Kelly, Howard, Glaspell, Lawson—do we peer, and probe, and question; do we heed the muted, aching cry of class or mass wrongs, of futile and of aching beings. Only in rare cases do we permit the dramatic surgeon to plunge his knife into our sore spots. Nor do we

listen, often, to the caustic, honest, charting of the operation.

Our great mass of theatre-goers demand amusement, first, last, and all the time. Only at rare intervals are they willing to be lectured at, exhorted, sermonized. And these occasions must be glorified by the magic of a well known playwright's name and fame.

None of us wants, actually, to be more than forty-five minutes from Broadway. From its tinsel, from its glare, from its chatter.

We are not seeking the small dramatic voice in the wilderness. The latter is, often, not amusing, nor sufficiently entertaining. For the most part, we want liberty in the theatre, liberty which easily descends to license. Not the liberty of thought which gave origin to Ibsen's "Ghosts" and Brieux's "Damaged Goods," but the type of license which welcomes the "Scandals," and condemns "The Captive."

Not the liberty which seeks a sound and valid exposition of ourselves, and our failings; but the insurgency which shouts all over the place, without rime or reason. Yet we have our thinking minority who welcome the cryptic vision of "Behold the Bridegroom," the tragic truth of "In Abraham's Bosom," the glorious splendor of "Marco Millions."

Our American theatre is still in its first stages of insurgency. Our insurrections are yet without form. We travel many roads; at one time, aiming directly at expressionism, as in the more recent plays by O'Neill, "Lazarus Laughed" and "Strange Interlude," or in the plays of the New Playwright's Theatre which seeks and seeks but has not yet found.

Yet in spite of the lack of popular success, this young group of playwrights seems to be headed in the right direction. They think and talk, shout and scold and storm. What they lack artistically, they possess intellectually. Em Jo Basshe wanders on the East Side and plucks the aching heart out of the tenements. John Howard Lawson revels in the inner life of many nations. John Dos Passos sees vital changes outside of "Manhattan Transfer"; Michael Gold writes "Fiestas" of singular beauty.

They are perhaps the most serious, and the most valuable "insurgents" we possess, though, at the moment, a trifle self-consciously so.

These young and anxious playwrights tread the same path in America as Lügne Poe in France, as Karl Heinz Martin in Austria, as Stanislavisky in Russia, as Ernst Toller in Germany. Their staging is as exotic as that of the "Freie Buhne," in Berlin, or the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow.

The greatest progress in America has undoubtedly

come from segregated altruistic groups. The Neighborhood Playhouse, alas! suspended for the moment, down in Grand Street, has cleared a path for native expression, and has discovered new playwrights, actors, and scenic artists.

The Civic Repertory Theatre, founded by Eva Le Gallienne, and presided over by her undoubted genius, hammers at the need for intelligent Repertory. Up to the moment she has done more for recognized foreign classics than for native American drama. But The Civic Repertory Theatre is young!

"The Provincetown" discovers new Negro talent, Pulitzer Prize Winners, strange young philosophic playwrights, and continues to hold aloft the banner for O'Neill, Green, and other important, but less known dramatists. The Provincetown group have remained unspoiled—idealistic and are especially valuable in the development of American drama.

The "Theatre Guild," "that ol' man Midas" of the New York Stage reiterates that it is here to foster strong native and foreign drama. While the Guild does not *discover* playwrights, yet it has brought acting standards to the highest level ever known in the United States.

Post-War conditions in Europe have their less violent reactions on this side of the Atlantic. Hav-

ing suffered less, we have grown less. We do not look up from dug-outs; nor peer through roofless tenements, trying to find our dramatic gods. We toy with Expressionism in an imitative, or naïvely peurile way. Our lives have not been shaken to their foundations, and the thick incrustations of gold-leaf around our consciousness may be more deadly than the naked hungers of the Old World.

Because we peer smugly from too many limousine windows we may fail to note the mental hunger of our people. Because our latest sensations are either of air-flights or new auto models, we may be growing permanently immune to the aching urge of our spiritual lives.

Because our dreams do not touch the problems of the people on the edge of great prairies, or those of our tenement house dwellers whose poetry must be timed to their machine world, we may not be observant enough to note the march of the more salient movements in World Theatres.

Because of our material opulence, and our spiritual poverty, we are slow in maturing dramatically, much slower than the simple, earnest peoples of Central Europe.

Dreams cannot thrive in an atmosphere of stock quotations, nor amidst the noise of Wall Street or Political Campaigns. We become impatient with our

Barries—having scant time for such as "Mary Rose," nor could we rear a "Peter Pan" on the frontiers of our speedy civilization.

Our dramatists have not yet penetrated nor analyzed the measure of our tempo, nor peered into the actual reasons for our maniacal speed. Neither have they dissected the most fundamental struggles of our economic existence, nor the curious conditions of our farm, village, "little city" lives. Rather do they give us the blatant sex situations of Broadway, the antics of the Prize Ring, the tarnished values of back stage contacts and the burlesque conditions of actors' lives.

Insurgent America has not yet reached the cause of her insurgency, dramatically. Are we afraid, perhaps, to pause and analyze? Are we reluctant to ascertain our destination? Is our fear founded on our own subconscious knowledge of ourselves? Or is it too much to expect that we should be as much concerned with ourselves, dramatically, as we are commercially? Perhaps.

III: EGYPT - THE INSCRUTABLE

In a land where overwhelming Pyramids and a remorseless Sphinx, have for centuries, thrown their mute exotic gestures across the sands—tangible, coherent drama has come slowly into being. Because, perhaps, of the *splendor* of natural back-drops and the painted flies of sky and Nile and desert, man has hesitated—in his puny imitations of the great Master Dramatist.

The majesty of old Cairo—its colored festoons of Fellaheens in fertile Nile land—the mental poverty in the byways of the opalescent old Bazaar—the glitter of life itself as it oozes along from amber sunrise to orange sunset, the lethargy which comes from this too tropical sun—all have retarded drama in Egypt remorselessly.

Yet, today, the Muezzin has sounded. And the call at eventide is not only to Allah, but also to a few theatres—so slowly evolving in this groping and curious city of the East.

Egyptian plays—even to those who can read the language—are endless, difficult affairs. In the main, they are historical or romantic—less dramatic than poetic.

At the "Theatre Semiramis," in which lengthy pageants are presented, the story is usually of a "Lady Fair and her Knight Errant." Often a Don Quixote will steal into an Egyptian courtyard and aim his bravado at the heart of an Egyptian Princess. But more often the play is an endless succession of scenes, compiled by one or more Egyptian dramatists. These scenes represent much that is allegorical—usually some tale of King or Beggar-maid. Their plots last for hours—with innumerable deaths, seductions, amours; much of the quality of the plays of early China—Persia or of far-off Sanskrit days.

To the interested Egyptian, the plays seem none too long, lasting as they do, from sun-down until midnight; but to the sophisticated Occidental—they seem like some lethal potion from the Orient.

These are the accepted forms of Egyptian drama. Modern in the sense that their technique has been the only one recognized since those early pantomimes, which are more a form of Egyptian pageantry than drama, in any sense.

Yet—since the War—a single definite movement has been made towards the development of a modern theatre in Cairo. That gesture has been made by Joseph Wahby Bey—(the "Bey" being Egyptian for Count)—and Joseph Wahby being one of the many

sons of a Pasha who has chosen the theatre as his career.

During the war—Wahby Bey was stationed in Italy. From Italy to France and then to England, he wandered, after the War; absorbing into his Egyptian consciousness, the not easily digested wisdom of Shaw, Galsworthy, Lenormand, Hauptman, and Pirandello. And into his young-old Egyptian consciousness came the fomentation of all the strange and startling dramas of these latter days. He saw new staging—new lighting, new methods of acting and producing. Above all, Wahby Bey realized that the world of the modern theatre was *not* content with the old order of affairs; but must do its own thinking on its own terms.

Then came the corollary realization—the inevitable sequel. Wahby Bey saw that no country could live on the static drama of the past. Each age must give birth to its own drama. As it forms its fashions in clothing, manners, and morals, so it must in its playhouses.

Joseph Wahby Bey began his experiment at a theatre in Cairo. He applied his personal fortune to the purchase and modernization of the Rameses Theatre. Today the "New Ramases" is artistic in decoration and lighting, and possesses every facility for modern stage productions.

Since the beginning, Wahby Bey was satisfied to produce the translations of Shaw, Schnitzler, Galsworthy, his theatre was of no moment in the Egyptian dramatic world. But because, lately, he has ceased to be content with translations, and has turned to the writing and production of native plays, his drama is of value to the modern world of the theatre.

Wahby Bey has been groping about in an effort to express Egyptian thought. In his own play, "Mind," he has come to close grips with psychoanalysis. His play concerns the source of all "mind," which he, like every Egyptian, believes to be buried at the base of the Pyramids.

Perhaps more in his productions, than in his dramas, Joseph Wahby has shown himself to be possessed of definite dramatic gifts. In his flat planes of purple or golden light, in the strange symbolic movements of his actors; in the vitriolic expression of subtle Egyptian passion, he has brought modern Egyptian stage technique into being. Whether it will bear fruit and be of permanent value in the future remains to be proved. Whether it will disappear with the current likewise remains to be seen.

Wahby Bey's contribution has, however, brought the drama to life in modern Cairo. It has furnished entertainment to the public, translated thought into

action, and given an immense fillip to the young Egyptian actor's ambitions.

Going to the theatre in Cairo is a never-to-be-forgotten experience. The performance begins long after sunset and well towards midnight as in Spain and Turkey. The audience is traditionally divided into two parts; the men, as the lords of life, occupying the entire ground floor or "orchestra," the women, the wealthy, of course, seated in lovely curtained loges, and the poorer, relegated to the top gallery. And occasionally from those tiny curtained loges comes a dramatic sigh, a sob, the sound of a tear. Egypt revels in her drama concealed behind silken curtains.

From gallery and orchestra come applause and arguments. Between the acts and afterwards, one hears high-pitched discussions of the play. For Egypt is ecstatic over this new form of amusement. The audience is alive, thrilling with emotion. The hero's fate is of tremendous importance. In raucous arguments the spectators take sides. Hisses and sneers greet the entrance of the villain, and the lovely heroine is accorded violent affection.

"Heroine" is a new word in the Egyptian dramatic vocabulary. It is only in Wahby Bey's theatre, only since the War, that an Egyptian woman has dared to mount the stage. Women, before the War,

were definitely "not allowed." If by chance, a woman was induced to play some small part, on some special occasion, she was invariably drawn from the lower social order. The moral status of such a woman would be questionable. Only recently, through Wahby Bey, have women of the higher class been induced to act. Today, slowly but surely, it is being recognized in Egypt that a woman may be an actress and still have "class."

The new drama in latter-day Egypt gropes eagerly towards some definite form of expression. During the winter months companies come down to Cairo from the Comédie Française, or Mr. Cochran sends a company from England, or Pirandello from Rome. Then the young Egyptian actors "take on" the color of French, Italian, or English players, and Wahby Bey has his work to do all over again to get native drama back into the "New Rameses."

But dramatic interest is awake. Joseph Hafiz, a young Egyptian playwright is experimenting with "New Thought in the Theatre" and "Freedom for Women." His plays are wild and fiercely rebellious, but have not yet attained popularity. Perhaps the real Egyptian drama lies in the audience—that mass of human beings, the inheritors of the original drama of life itself, born in the cradle of mankind. They argue, quarrel, expostulate, wax enthusiastic over

what is yet but a mediocre interpretation of modern tendencies.

They sit in dense darkness, lighted only by experimental rays of green and purple calcium, while outside the stars blink from the deeper purple of a close Egyptian sky. While the natural calcium of a new moon pours its pathos over an ageless Sahara, down which has gone the greatest dramatic pageant ever known to mankind.

SEMIRAMIS THEATRE IN CAIRO

CHINESE MALE ACTORS OF TODAY

IV: CHINA – THE ANCESTRAL

The drama that originated in China in the Seventh Century before our Era, with the legend of the Spinning Damsel and her Lord of the Milky Way, who made a bridge of magpies on the Seventh Moon to tryst their eternal romance, has not changed very considerably to this day. When in 735 A. D. Huan Tung and his royal consort stood gazing at the sky and the great Emperor ordered a diversion for his consort to occur in the Imperial Pear Garden, he laid the foundations of Chinese drama.

Into this drama today is woven that worship, not only of Huan Tung, but of all his Chinese ancestors who preceded him.

From earliest times Chinese plays were given in open spaces, sometimes in royal Pear Gardens, sometimes by strolling players just along the roadside. Always they were strange interminable affairs filled with weird music and with the lengthy ebullitions of tireless actors.

In China hundreds of young male and female performers go to dramatic schools where they are trained in the Chinese traditional manner to sing, dance, and act. Formerly these actors were held in

high esteem, mingling with Princes and Princesses. Today they are sunk to a comparatively low level. They are rather universally regarded as poor wretches, obliged to live from hand to mouth, with no social position, and deserving only of infamy. They roam the country-side, acting where they can, lying on crude shelves in wayside dressing rooms, steeped thick in opium clouds.

Many Chinese boys, especially in the South of China, are still purchased from their parents or taken from foundling asylums, and become slaves to their managerial owners until they can buy their freedom. During their apprenticeship all of their earnings go to their owners who support them in clothing and food. There are some exceptions. These are the actors of unusual ability who are styled Chan Wu or Chan Tu, in accordance with their impersonation of either male or female characters. Actors are not allowed to purchase literary or official rank, thus being barred from the only paths of honor in the eyes of the public. There have been instances of actors assuming false names and competing for titles. But on being discovered the actors in such cases are publicly dishonored.

In Hong Kong, Macao, and Canton there are large and substantial theatres. In these the back-drops of the stages—which are fixtures—are handsomely

painted; but the subjects painted have no relation to the plays performed. In the South of China there is no stage scenery, except what visiting companies may employ.

The green rooms are back of the stage and there are two entrances—one on the right for entrance and one on the left for exit.

Mountains, rivers, bridges, temples, graves, thrones, beds are represented by an arrangement of chairs and benches; while the passage over rivers, mountain climbing, horseback riding, unlocking doors, and entering a house where not even a screen exists between the visitor and the family are conducted by pantomimic motions perfectly understood by the audience.

A general sent on a distant expedition brandishes his whip, capers around the stage a few times to the clashing of cymbals, then stops and informs the audience that he has arrived! Strangely enough the scenery is not so inferior to that of Shakespeare's day when a man with loam over him represented a wall, and his half-open fingers a cranny for lovers to whisper through.

Actors "make-up" in a central dressing-room and use masks as in early Greece. The dressing room is "general" before the opening of the play. The poor actors can be seen stretched on shelves, smoking

opium, and repeating their endless parts without pause.

They wait until a few minutes before their "call" comes to "make-up." They dress to imitate "ladies" who are seldom represented by members of their own sex on the Chinese stage.

In the permanent theatres of Hong Kong performances take place twice daily. They begin at eleven in the morning and continue with a short intermission until midnight. Performances are usually held in bamboo structures dedicated to the Deities after whom they are named.

Collections are made for the actors three or four days before they arrive in town. At least they are sure of some payment—perhaps more than the "traveling" players in other lands. The theatre is "let" to the highest bidder who, for a lump sum, has the privilege of retaining all entrance money. A gallery with raised seats runs along each side of the playhouse. To this section admission is charged. But the standing in the center is free!

A "proper" company in China consists of about one hundred persons whose salaries range from twelve to thirty thousand yen a year! The skilled actors who can impersonate dainty ladies are the highest paid and are in greatest demand.

A Chinese program reads somewhat as follows

(and when its oddity has faded we begin to see its common sense):

"One Cheng Sheng who personates Emperors or distinguished Persons and wears a flowing beard."

"Three Hsiao Shengs who represents youthful civilians, one of whom is usually the Hero."

"Three Wu Shengs who represent elderly military characters and wear long beards."

"One Wai who has a painted face and performs feats of great daring, and who is usually the plotting villain of the piece."

The strongest point of the drama in China is the interesting music which is given appropriately to the play and is varied in advance of each scene, in prelude form to arouse the expectations of the audience.

The drama of China is divided into "Cheng-Pan" or historical plays, "Chu-ton" which embodies domestic pieces of all kinds from tragedy to comedy, and the "Ku-Wei" or farces. The Cheng-pan with their procession of historical characters strongly resemble some of Shakespeare's historical plays.

Most Chinese plays, however, have farcical incidents; but in the "Sorrowful Plays," as they are called, some of the melodrama is sprinkled with

simple "fun." There are occasional pantomimes in which gods and genii, grotesque persons such as giants and dwarfs, and various animals are represented amid a brilliant display of lamps.

Actors upon their first entry sing or recite a score of words, then lavishly introduce themselves by giving a condensed history of the character they are about to represent. Throughout the play the audience is taken into the actor's confidence, and is at times addressed directly in a way absolutely unknown to us.

Chinese dramas deal mostly with the home life and customs of the people. The Chinese student learns history, mythology, manners, and customs from the stage.

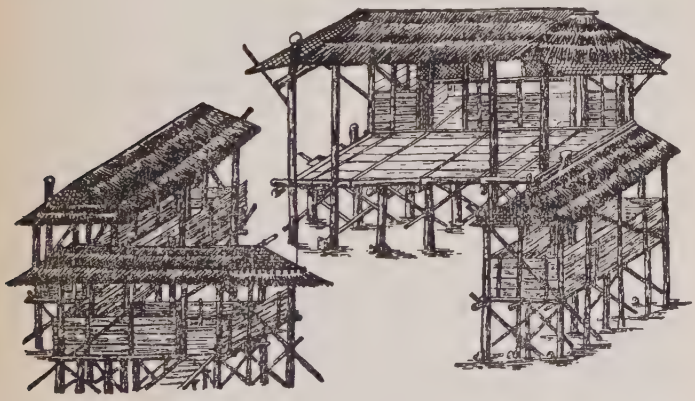
Besides a repertoire of old plays each troupe has a playwright attached to it who furnishes new dramas upon demand, at short notice. The poor playwright leads a miserable life, being abused if the play is a failure, and ignored if it is a success!

Plays are not divided into acts, but have something corresponding to such divisions. They are burdened with a great deal of repetition. Their plots, if plots they can be called, usually culminate in the victory of virtue over vice, although the mystery about virtue and vice is less secretly guarded than in the plays of the Occident.

Plays go on for many days, historical dramas being followed by farces. At the end of every performance the audience joins in a general tumbling with the actor.

Plays, players, and playwrights ramble on in an engaging simplicity. Plots continue forever. The theatre in China is saturated with interesting old Chinese music and with dramas that seem endless.

And underneath and above it all is the fierce burning passion, the reverence, the unquestioning devotion to those beings who have made China's present existence possible—her Ancestors!



CHINESE MAT THEATRE

V: JAPAN – THE ELUSIVE

Modern Japan is a curious mixture of slowly invading Occidental tendencies which give battle to the trail of the aristocratic "*Nō*" plays of the ancient régime. Geisha girls foolishly parading in grotesque American flapper costumes contrast strangely with the handsome brocaded apparel of Japanese "Julian Eltinges." For strangely enough, "lady-actresses" are still rare quantities in this land of Ancestor worship.

The theatre is a mélange in Japan; as strange a potpourri in its choice of themes as the Derby-hatted Japanese gentlemen but lately returned from Oxford are a contrast to those relics of the "Samurai" who still cling to exquisite kimonos.

In the handsome theatres of Tokio whose capacity is from three to four thousand, Japan houses at one time a strange translation of Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, or a Belasco play, and again a drama in which a Shinto priestess commits hari-kari and fades into glorious oblivion.

Yet, despite Japan's adherence to the past, modernization of a certain sort seems come to stay. The women of Japan, in defiance of their lords who deny them the right to appear on the stage, have organized

a theatre of their own in which no men are allowed either on the stage or in the audience. It is called the "Women's Theatre." Women do all the work, as scene-shifters, producers, actors, regulating everything connected with the playhouse. Report of this theatre first drifted to the outside world through a noted English traveler, Sir Osman Edwards, who by disguising himself as a Japanese woman gained admittance. The "Women's Theatre" was the first to translate and produce Shaw and other European playwrights. As might be expected these plays did not prove enormously successful, due to the difference in the oriental and the occidental view points. Yet the sight of a Japanese lady in the rôle of a Shavian heroine may be no more grotesque than that of a sturdy American "Butterfly" in ludicrous kimono.

The drama of Japan is haunting in its beauty. There are the little soul-poems, plays developed from the aristocratic "*Nō*" play of the past. Some of these have been translated by Leo Duran in a book called "The Plays of Old Japan," and their very titles are alluring—"The Diamyo," a stirring drama of love and infidelity; "The Horns," a terrific battle between the body and the spirit; "The Locked Hands," "The Fisher Boy of Urashima," "The Tongue-Cut Sparrow," and many others.

These may be classed among the modern dramas of Japan. There are, however, many performances of plays that have found favor in former times, plays that were produced by the "Young People in the Pear Garden," those young actors of far-off centuries. The Japanese cling reverently to tradition. Their choruses are the choruses of ancient times. They still function interminably, performing all physical duties. If there is weeping or sighing, kissing, embracing, praying or dying, the Chorus performs these little chores for the actors, while their antics drift without humor to an understanding audience.

In Japan acting has been brought to a high level. Expert in facial expression, skilful and subtle of movement, poised and precise, the actor in Japan gives evidence of a deep understanding of the rôle he depicts. Because of the lack of stage setting he is forced to interpret, amuse, fascinate, and continuously entertain.

The tremendous sense of filial duty has undoubtedly influenced the drama both in Japan and China. It is only in the most recent times that dramatists have dared to think independently of their grandfathers—have dared to do much thinking at all!

There is so much that is uniquely interesting in the Japanese theatre—principally the still unendurable

position of the playwright. Living on a meager yearly salary, this poor hack author must cut his story to suit not only the leading man, the chorus, the orchestra leader, the designer of costumes, but often prominent patrons in the audience as well. One can imagine the unity and structure of such a grotesquerie. Yet the Japanese playwright is reviled and cursed, and in many instances actually beaten, if he offends any of the powers whom he has been ordered to please. He leads a miserable existence, being compelled to travel with the company from place to place and to introduce quick changes or new parts to order. Socially he is considered of no importance whatever.

Japanese actors, on the contrary, are very prominent socially and much sought after. Since no actresses are allowed in the important theatres men take all the female rôles. A good feminine impersonator is a Star of the first magnitude and boys are taken "young" and trained for this profession. They are placed in the houses of brilliant women, or in high-class girls' schools, where their talents are watched, tended, and developed. A Japanese actor is well paid, and in some instances has received five thousand dollars a year—as much as a Japanese Prime Minister.

Because of the lack of scenery, and the resultant

early emphasis in the powers of concentration, Japanese actors have developed the art of pantomime to a high degree. Their movements are the essence of thought and are in themselves gestures of transcendent beauty. This power of pantomime reaches its highest point at times in the Chorus who, being all old men, have perfected the art by long practice.

The strange commingling of the old and the new is never better exemplified than by the attempted "occidental rendition" of an American musical comedy. This is the report of a recent eye-witness to one of the latest atrocities. Twenty dumpy Japanese maidens in red ballet skirts—picture the effect—with their hair curled and done up in Parisian style greeted the astonished eyes of a Caucasian visitor to a theatre in beautiful Kyoto. From the music emitted by the Orchestra the foreigner presently grasped the fact that he was witnessing a Japanese production of "The Chocolate Soldier." Perhaps it was no funnier to his eyes and ears than is the spectacle of a stalwart Nordic soprano in a kimono prancing through the agonies of "Madame Butterfly" to the eyes and ears of a Japanese. But, then, of course, we are not orientalizing our theatres, whereas the Asiatics are occidentalizing theirs. These ballet girls looked very un-Japanese, and the hero of the piece whose voice broke down in the middle

SCENES FROM MODERN JAPANESE PROBLEM PLAYS

SCENES FROM JAPANESE NŌ PLAYS

contented himself with dancing and jumping around to the music.

Audiences in Japan laugh until the tears roll down their cheeks at the absurdities of Western singing. They stuff their sleeves into their mouths as we might our pocket handkerchiefs in the vain endeavor to contain themselves.

The musical comedy in Japan is no funnier, perhaps, than the "movie." The Japanese gets the setting of the story not from the captions but through a leather-lunged reader who interprets the picture. This requires great skill, for the reader must not only tell the story rapidly but must also invent words for every speaker in the picture. Frequently at the end of the performance he appears in a frock coat to bow before the spectators and receive their plaudits, looking as grave and solemn as only a Japanese in formal dress can manage to do.

Among American residents of Japan many stories are told of these interpretations of American films —Charlie Chaplin's antics and Gloria Swanson's unchaperoned episodes in the wrong bedrooms. The most famous story, perhaps, is the one about the "reader" who explained that American men and women are not so immoral as to make love in real life, but that the final "clinch" comes only in the pictures. The moral code of the Japanese is such

that they are as shocked by love making as are American ladies by the bath "au naturel" of the coal-loading women of Nagasaki after their dusty labor is done.

But sometimes, even through an interpreter, these readers are dramatic. In Nagasaki a picture was shown depicting dramatizations of episodes from the Russo-Japanese War. Before Port Arthur stood a group of Japanese soldiers listening in awe-struck attitudes to General Nogi who was telling the young men how a Japanese fighter goes to his death. It was a most impressive lesson in patriotism. In these plays the chivalrous code of the Japanese warrior has found frequent expression. They still have their stirring appeal in spite of modern innovations in Japan. They embody the best in their traditions.

It is interesting to trace the theatres of many modern Japanese plays back to the mystic regions of prehistoric times.

In the green night cast by giant cryptomeria trees over the shrines at Nikko, and in the stillness accentuated only by murmuring springs or the tuneful Temple bells one can see the very source of the theatre of Japan. On a platform before a shrine an aged little priestess wears a shining white head-dress and a long white gown. It is not merely posturing, such as the Geishas generally offer, but a lively dance,

at times even violent in its whirling motions. The Priestess is always inspired. After a long time spent in meditation and prayer she becomes possessed of of the soul of a hero of the past, and her dance is always an expression of the great deeds of that hero.

Staging in Japan is exquisitely simple and beautiful. Symbolism and suggestion are carried to the greatest lengths. The passing of a spirit is suggested by gauzy, floating draperies, and a battle of wills is perpetrated by the symbol of a priest and a demon —in visible, human form.

There is little tangible scenery. A rustic bridge may signify a road, a village, or the passing of an army. The usual back-drop of the Japanese theatre is a screen of simple but beautiful design.

The playhouses themselves are ordinarily large and airy, although in the principal towns there are a few smaller ones. The audience is seated on straw mats in the orchestra; the richer patrons, in curtained loges. One does not "pay at the door," but buys one's seat from a tea-house proprietor who also sends in refreshments from time to time. One must check one's hat and overcoat and watch and chain at the tea-house, for pickpockets are frequent visitors in Japanese theatres.

The best time to go to the theatre in Japan is about ten-thirty on Monday morning. For it is then

that the Geisha girls are paid off, after which they change their costumes and parade among the audience. These girls are as much an object of interest and beauty as the actors, especially to Western visitors.

Strangely enough, many modern European or American themes have passed into the repertory of the old-style Japanese theatre, and, by remaining, have helped to keep it from stagnating. Frequent attempts have been made, especially by students, to present imported plays with the kind of staging that they receive in New York or Berlin. Such plays, as a rule, have not proven very successful.

Plays may continue from one to twenty, forty, or sixty hours, sometimes for a week; with frequent intermissions for food and rest. The audience sits impassive through long and seemingly endless perorations intermingled with poems and reverential salaams to Ancestors. In the intervals the audience strolls and discusses the play; but there is none of the fiery interest of Egypt, Italy, or Spain.

Going to the theatre in Japan is a never-to-be-forgotten experience. In beautiful temples of art one watches lacy clouds drift by. In a land exquisite with cherry blossoms and the most charming vistas of beauty one can well become immersed in the eternal drama of the Orient.

VI: RUSSIA – THE PASSIONATE

No drama of a nation digs more at the soul of her people than Russia. Skirting its outer hardened apostasy of sin and crime, avoiding its seeming callousness, ignoring the boasted cruelty of its laws and law makers, the Russian dramatists tear away the shirt of Russia and expose its bleeding heart.

Tolstoi, with the pen of a gentle physician, pleader for the people; Tchekov with the pathos of a minister to the soul; Gorky with the vigorous anæsthetics of the surgeon; and Andreyev, with the divine pity of a Christ, probe for us into the black and staggering soul of Russia. They turn for us a page of drama unexcelled in any land.

Dramatists of moods, of conditions, with the tender hearts of children and the vast pity of parents, producers of a new wizardry, experimenters into the past and future—these Russian writers command and hold our intense interest.

Though not of the stature of the outstanding dramatists of later day Russia, Alexander Ostrovsky is the noteworthy Russian dramatist of the central decades of the nineteenth century—of the years when the realistic school was all-powerful in Russian

literature, when Turgeniev, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoi created prose fiction that has no superior in the world's literature. Socially viewed, Ostrovsky's work in the Drama takes its place beside the novel of his period. Obviously inferior as it is in certain ways, it sheds light on an important side of Russian life which the novelists left practically untouched. Turgeniev and Tolstoi were gentlemen by birth and wrote of the fortunes of the Russia nobility or of the peasants whose villages bordered on the nobles' estates. Dostoyevsky, though not of the landed-proprietor class, dealt, nevertheless, with the nobility, albeit with its waifs and strays. None of these masters more than touched the Russian merchants—that home-spun moneyed class, crude and coarse, grasping and mean, without the idealism of their educated neighbors in the cities or the homely charm of the peasants from whom they themselves sprang. Yet they were gifted with a rough force and determination not often found among the cultivated aristocracy. This was the field that Ostrovsky made peculiarly his own.

Born in 1823, the son of a lawyer doing business among the Moscow tradesmen, Ostrovsky early became familiar with the life of the Russian merchant class. Beginning with 1852 Ostrovsky gave his whole strength to literary work. He is exceptional

among Russian authors in having devoted himself almost exclusively to the theatre. The latest edition of his works contains forty-eight pieces written entirely by him. His plays are of varied character, including dramatic chronicles based on early Russian history and a fairy play, "Little Snowdrop." His real strength lay, however, in the drama of manners in which he gave realistic pictures of Russian life among the city classes and the minor nobility. He was recognized from the time of the appearance on the stage of his first pieces, in 1853 and the following years, as without a rival in the Russian theatre. He has come to be regarded as a worthy disciple of Gogol, the great founder of Russian realism. In his earlier plays not one ray of sunshine penetrates the gloom. In "Poverty Is No Crime," however, we perceive a new glow. Ostrovsky had now been affected by the Slavophile school of writers who found in the traditions of Russian society treasures of kindliness and love which they contrasted with the superficial glitter of Western civilization. Life in Russia is varied as elsewhere, and Ostrovsky could change his tone without doing violence to realistic truth. The tradesmen had not wholly lost the patriarchal charm of their peasant fathers. Good-heartedness is the touchstone by which Ostrovsky tries character; and this may be

hidden beneath even a drunken and degraded exterior.

As a dramatist Ostrovsky is above all else a realist. No more thoroughly natural dramas than his were ever composed. Yet he lacks a neat, concise construction. Pages of his dialogue often serve no purpose except to shed a little light on characterization or perhaps slightly to heighten the impression of commonplace reality. He rarely employs the drama to treat of great moral or social problems. He is not a revolutionary thinker or an opponent of existing society. His ideal, like that of his predecessor, Gogol, is honesty, kindliness, generosity, and loyalty in a broad and general way to the traditions of the past. He attacks serfdom not as an isolated leader of a forlorn hope, but as an adherent of a great party of moderate reformers. Among his best known plays are: "A Protégée of the Mistress," "Poverty Is No Crime," "Sin and Sorrow Are Common to All," and "It's a Family Affair—We'll Settle it Ourselves."

From the gold palaces of Moscow Tolstoi wandered to the peasant life of Tsarskoe-Selo, and gave us the drama of the "Living Corpse," and the imperishable "Powers of Darkness."

"Anna Karenina," in the dramatization as in Tolstoi's immortal story, lives a thousand lives. In the

white lights of a passionate city, in the hidden amours of many men, from the secrecy and the hideous conditions of her own life Tolstoi's Anna goes from a dramatic life to a more dramatic death. Here is meat for many plays; and from the white snows of Siberia comes a still more dramatic "Resurrection." Prisons and revolutions, forbidden loves, police nets, starvation, hunted criminals—all of this breeds endless plays. Plots are born of every moment, and from the works of persecuted prisoners a thousand Victor Hugos may be born.

Maxim Gorky knows his "Little Fathers" of the Steppes. Morbid in his own life, Gorky can go down to the "Lower Depths" and paint for us priests and prostitutes, soldiers, vagrants in the blackest slums. Gorky, too, has pity—the pity of a deep understanding. From "Orloff and Son" emerge two eternal, Christ-like figures. From "Mother" comes a woman born of the womb of eternal verities.

Above all the Russian dramatists know life. Not from gilded boxes or from decorated back-drops. The life they know is life in all its intensity—glittering with a strange luster, scattered in crazy dens and hideous brothels, the life that consumes and is consuming, because it senses its destiny, its very hopelessness, here below—forced by an abysmal urge to move, faster, faster, to its appointed end.

Andreyev limns for us "The Seven Who Were Hanged." This dramatization is not so much a play as the successive incidents woven about seven convicted prisoners none of whom dares believe in his execution. Yet from the common misery comes a comradeship, a deep unselfishness, a great fear. All are painted with the art of complete knowledge. All, colorful and poignant, with a realism that cries out —and perishes. Andreyev shows his great mastery of drama dealing with cataclysmic destiny of men in "Anathema," "The Days of Our Lives" and "He Who Gets Slapped." His plays have been produced in many languages and in every civilized land.

Yet the violent dramas of Tolstoi and Gorky were no incentive to the more subtle and poetic Tchekov. Seeing all colors in the modest beauty of a rose, in a dozen reflections of the secluded lives of his "Three Sisters," Tchekov has woven greater dramas out of static situations than any incest or rapine could ever generate. From the bare corridors of a Russian hospital and the doctoring of poor peasantry, Tchekov brought to us his probing, thematic dramas. A weaver of many skeins, a painter of many moods, the creator of a new technique, the seer of an old people, Tchekov has given us the lyric "Sea Gull," the morbid "Ivanov," the ruthless "Cherry Orchard," and the eternal "Three Sisters." Tchekov's life is a

brilliant mosaic of tantalizing color, and into its pattern is woven the great sadness of the Russian people. Tchekov's art is comparable only to De Maupassant's—yet his dramas are like nothing ever known.

The poet of moods, the chronicler of quiet lives which are born to live and dream but never to achieve, Tchekov has brought new material and a brilliant personal technique into the playhouses of the world.

He takes his characters and scatters them like loose, brilliant-colored threads around a room, a city, a village. On and on these lives go, seemingly unconnected, seemingly scattered, until, at the end, the careful Weaver steals upon the stage, gathers the threads, leaves them loosely interwoven, and steals off again.

In a moment hectic drama rushes out. A passionate love, a lilt and sob of a drooping "Sea-Gull," the hollow cry of an old prima donna, the misery of "Uncle Vanya," or the felling of the trees in the "Cherry Orchard," when an old order passes.

Tchekov the careful physician, listening to the beats of the aching hearts of men! His is the artistry of a new, and imperishable dramatic creator.

One could write endlessly of the realism of the Russians, of their knowledge of the heart of woman,

of their art which seems so artless. Plays without beginnings. Episodic dramas, unplanned, torn from some dramatic moment of a life. Plays seemingly without theme—unless we can call themes the happenings of a people. Plays which do not sermonize —unless one can call "sermons" the things which spell disaster in other lives. Triumphs of poetry, of color, of human charm. Authors who sob with us, or smile with rare humor.

Human authors who write about human beings. Great actors who study eternally the human patterning of an everyday smile or tear.

Actresses who tear out their hearts in passion. Who sob and smile, grow old and desperate in the service of their art.

Peering, questioning artists all, climbing into the future, trying in every known way under the sun to mirror what to them seems life.

Above all is the hidden heart of Russia in the drama of her suppressed emotions. Simple, with the candor of children, expressing all that pathos, all that crushed inertia, all that great pity which political Russia knows not, nor heeds.

Across our memory flies "The Sea-Gull." Broken Nina, followed by a sob from Tchekov, whispering to us that Nina demands our endless pity.

Or the prostitute from the "Lower Depths," who,

meeting her Christ, knows him not by name, yet clings to him as the visible spark of God-head—the only God she has ever known.

The Russians tear at life itself—writing, staging, acting, lighting and producing, going to the fountain-head of art, which is merely every-day living.

Nemirovich Danchenko, Constantin Stanislavsky, Anton Tchekov before his death, Maria Ouspenskaya, Richard Boleslavsky, the artists of the Moscow Art Theatre; the Kamerny Theatre at Moscow; the Musical Art Studios and the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg vie with each other in a vivid delineation of life.

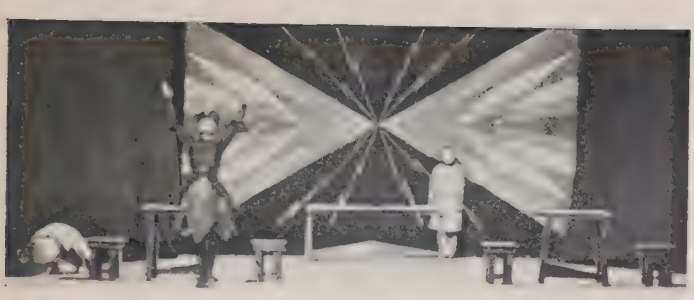
Stage directors, long since discarding the remotest trace of classicism, have left far behind the realism of "Antoine's Theatre Libre" or the studied movements of the House of Molière. Stage lighting aims at beauty or at passion in its simplest forms. The Kamerny Theatre plunges into new Expressionism, making a single winding staircase do for many scenes, or a weird, futuristic background take the place of many planes.

Gordon Craig in his poetic simplicity, leaving the English stage, finds himself at home in Moscow. Max Reinhardt studies carefully the work of these dramatic pioneers, and the schools of America and

the Continent heed the stage methods of this strange and distant land.

We cannot leave modernist Russia without a word about Maierhold. This charlatan in stage production has become the subject of many legends, he and his Theatre Revolutionaire. The strangest myths have been extant about him. One report has it that he produces one act ON the stage, the other IN the audience, and the other on the *street* outside the playhouse. Another has it that he has live pigs and animals running about the stage when he needs them. Every journeyman producer who wanted to be unique in the theatre in the last decade has been producing eccentric novelties and calling them "The Theatre of Maierhold."

Yet Stanislavsky, the veteran of the Moscow Art Theatre was the strongest incentive for Maierhold and had the greatest respect for his productions. Also Vachtangov, the immemorial director of "The Dybbuk." Maierhold is a theatrical *Superman.* An idea of just one of his productions will give a clue to his ideas in the theatre. This was "Mysteria Buffe," which portrayed so vividly the relation of the theatre toward sentimental Religious faith and strong Revolutionary pathos. Such scenes as the great Globe of Earth, Noah's Ark, Heaven and Hell! Heaven was not complete without Leo Tolstoi and



MAIERHOLD'S CONSTRUCTIVIST THEATRE

MAIERHOLD'S "HEDDA GABLER"

Jean Jacques Rousseau! Both were dressed in long white shirts and short white wings!

The first impression of Maierhold's theatre is its essential difference from other theatres. One stands still. It seems as if one had come too soon, or the actors have been delayed or some other catastrophe has occurred. For the stage is not set and the curtain is not down as is usual when an audience is expected.

The stage is open, dark and empty. Nothing much is to be seen. The glare of orchestra lamps illuminates it just sufficiently to make noticeable some theatrical properties; the silhouette of a table, a chair, a strange, large cage which reminds one of a meat grinding machine as in "Smert Tarelkin" (Tarelkin's Death). Again one may see the shadow of God or a whole factory with wheels as in "The Great-Hearted Cuckold." All the ropes on the stage are visible and all the sets *waiting* to be placed.

The orchestra itself looks strange. The boxes have been removed so that there may be no special places of honor. The audience appears clad *most* simply, and sits wherever there is space.

Interest and curiosity in Maierhold's productions are intense. Everybody—even the Russian Tired Business Man knows that in each play there will be æsthetic surprises. Undoubtedly some satire on the

latest developments in politics at home and abroad, yet the same evening may bring out some still more modern songs, dances, etc. Artists of all sorts come to see by what means everyday occurrences can be presented through Maierhold's theatrical prism.

And, since everything on the stage should influence the spectator, so the play itself must be in keeping with our tempo. Today, actors on the stage cannot sit, walk, or stand as in days of old. Nowadays actors must run, jump, and fly because life runs, the age jumps . . . decades fly! All of which helps to explain some of Maierhold's methods. When an actor is supposed to sit down, a chair is shot up through the floor, beds actually fly, walls run, and in scenes of the city, motorcycles and cars run through the audience, up and down the stage. Everything today is put into the day's tempo.

Maierhold makes similar demands on his actors. Yet he is slightly more conservative in this direction. He insists upon the thoroughness of Stanislavsky, and, contrary to the custom of the Habima's and many modern dramatic directors, his actors are not made up at all.

It is interesting to note that while there was much criticism among laymen, many calling Maierhold pure bunk, directors, actors, and authors have taken him seriously. Many, while not endorsing

everything that he does, begin to work in his manner, adapting and adopting many of his ideas. So that today every new Moscow production shows the influence of this audacious, super-modern producer.

Russia, the meeting point of the East and West, adapts silently the involved drama of old China, yet bursts with hectic passion over the Cubism and Vorticism of France and Austria.

Russia is experimental, exotic, and poetic. Russia probes violently into the silent places within man. Russian audiences as well as actors are dramatic and dynamic. The cauldron of a new nation comes seething from the atrophied spirit of the old. A Russian Revolution, comparable only to the French, is born within our own times. And from its bleeding entrails comes a raw and important drama.

The values of Tchekov are inextricably interwoven with the Moscow Art Theatre—that unique and colorful group of artists that has reached the high points of its art under Stanislavsky, under Danchenko, inspired and held together in its early years by Anton Tchekov. The promise of a play from him was the reveille to new battles, new struggles, new conquests.

There has probably never been the same type of dramatic organization as the Moscow Art Group, with its Musical Studio Associates, with its intense "fam-

ily spirit." Nearest to this spirit we may mention the Comédie Française of early days where Molière gathered around him his actor-friends who in their close association correlated their lives from many angles; and the "Passion Players" at Ober-Ammergau who live, too, in this intimate correlation of life and work.

In the early days of struggle of the Moscow Art Players—a struggle which concerned itself often with bread as well as art—Stanislavsky and Tchekov functioned as the parents of an ambitious family. Tchekov gave of his creative genius; Stanislavsky fed, exhorted, scolded, housed, and loved.

Stanislavsky's personality was the father of the Moscow Art group. In order to house the actors more economically he moved to quarters in the country far from Moscow. Tchekov would come to stay as well as Tolstoi. Drama began at breakfast, with violent discussions concerning the characters of "The Cherry Orchard," or "Uncle Vanya." Models were sought from wayside inns or farmhouses. Scrub-women were brought from the back rooms of saloons so that one might see how they scrubbed and moved and chatted. An old innkeeper and his wife were persuaded to play their natural rôles so that the Moscow actors might adapt their every move. Their verisimilitude was found to be so potent that they

were kept in the play, as part of the cast. Stanislavsky had endless arguments with his actors and with Tchekov, spending endless weeks with his mise-en-scènes, studying, isolating himself, employing every faculty to establish authenticity in his productions.

The Moscow Artists blazed a trail from Moscow through the Western world. English audiences welcomed them with a strangely un-English enthusiasm. New York, despite the barriers of language, worshiped the passionate verity of the actors and the stark realism of the plays. The success of the performances was enormous. The showmanship of Morris Gest was never displayed more brilliantly. People were thrilled by these dynamic actors who seemed vast storehouses of passion.

Tchekov loved his Moscow Actors. They helped to keep him alive. Hounded by tuberculosis, he responded desperately to their hunger for his plays. For them he wrote his greatest works: "The Sea-Gull," "The Three Sisters, "Uncle Vanya," "The Cherry Orchard," "Ivanov" and a number of brilliant one act dramas. For them he labored in his invalid chamber—almost to the close of his life. At their first-nights he hung shame-faced in the wings, like a truant school-boy. Because a mystic silence of strange import greeted the opening performance of "The Sea-Gull," he ran away, believing

the play to be a failure, and was out of sight for many days. He never could be persuaded to make curtain speeches.

He lived with the frail people of his fancy and knew them in every detail. Yet under and around the dread melancholy of many of his themes lurks a furtive sense of humor, which breaks out strangely, as in the curious characteristics of "Uncle Vanya" or of Trepleff in "The Sea-Gull."

Because of Tchekov the Moscow Art Theatre rose to enormous importance in the dramatic life of Moscow, and later in St. Petersburg. First the cities became conscious of this new art force, then the nation, then the world.

The staging of Danchenko, of Komisarzhevsky, of Bolevslavski, became the pattern for new staging the world over. At the Kamerny Theatre, strange cubistic staircases, single planes, platforms, and odd fan-shaped cubicles set the imagination a-tingle.

Frank Wedekind down in Germany realized that his "Francesca" needed just such treatment. And Karl Heinz Martin in far-off Vienna applied the Kamerny Theatre theories to Wedekind and the plays of Frank Czokor.

The Russians are daring, stimulating, enigmatic. They tantalize the eye and intrigue the imagination. Theirs is the courage that discards custom and con-

vention; and, assuming that audiences are in some measure artistic, proceed without further apology to eliminate and to suggest.

Theirs is the economic method which concentrates on substance, which pares settings to the bone of niggardly stage structure, preferring to have its audiences concentrate on the power, the passion, the mental processes of its characters.

Theirs is a subjective realistic art which insists firmly on its symbols—the symbols that will clothe its intentions simply, powerfully. Their actors are concerned with portraiture, and paint knowingly. Their portraits are such as Dostoyevsky limned, or Tolstoi depicted in his novels. Portraits lingering in the heavy mufti of Siberia with the aching sadness of Moscow or again with the endless thirst and hunger of the Steppes.

VII: SPAIN – THE SYMBOLIST

Spanish drama forms a nocturne of indisputable distinction. Against the black curtains of night are thrown actors in prismatic colors, an audience emotional and enthusiastic, and the movements of a drama peculiarly characteristic of a nation. Perhaps the most symbolic keynote in the theatre in Spain is the hour at which the curtain rises—which may be anywhere between ten and midnight. More often the latter.

Spanish producers time their performances to the period when the hour glass runs low and man has discarded all desire for convention, the hour when life runs riot in a maze of passion and emotion.

Midnight, in most countries, but especially in Spain, is the hour when human beings dare experiment with the past, the present, and the future. They fling their challenges at custom, quarreling with the need for form. Emotion, especially, runs riot, clothing itself at times in sentiment, at others in sentimentality.

Post-War drama in Spain is a new page in an old and yellowed volume. From the romantic days of Lope de Vegas, Calderon, Cervantes, the trail has

narrowed to the psychologic analyses of Benavente, Manuel Rivas, Echegaray, to the photogravures of Sierra, Dos Quinteros, and to the dramas of Angel Guimera in far off Portugal. Guimera tells his tale of "Marta of the Lowlands" with a dynamic sweep of passion, entirely individual and distinguished.

If we were to judge solely from Benavente the symbolist and Echegaray the satirist, we would conclude that Spanish dramatists are in the front rank of psycho-analysts and modernists. But, in addition to these two brilliantly analytic writers, there is a group of lesser playwrights who do for the theatres of Madrid what Boulevard authors do for Paris, and popular playwrights for New York.

In Madrid musical and platitudinous comedies also flourish, and burlesques add their jingle to while away the night for the tired business-man. No résumé of the theatre of a country can be complete without considering the plays for this "T. B. M."

So, on most evenings, we find the Spanish Señor and his Señora sipping black coffee while they witness thrilling melodramas from the south of Spain or applaud languidly some Spanish dancer—the feature of the evening in spite of a plethora of highly interesting one-act plays.

These entertainments do not represent the best in contemporary Spanish drama; yet the drama of a

country, the habits of its audiences must be judged quite as much from its music halls as from its opera houses.

The audiences of Spain are dynamic and dramatic. Through thick smoke clouds, in beautiful theatres, the Spanish grandee and his lady form as exquisite a picture as any on the stage. They sigh and smile, love and hate, are moved to pity or to tears with a somnolent melancholy which is nothing if not artistic. And in the entre-actes, in the courtyard of the theatre, under the thick dome of night, the play goes on, behind lovely feather fans, or under a starry canopy of Spanish shrubbery.

The dramatist in Spain need only draw his themes from life, borrowing his scenery from the colored marbles of old cities, and his characters from the ripe beauties everywhere.

Yet the quality of Spanish drama is more than beautiful. Its insight is deeper than a cursory glance might indicate. Echegaray gives us satires of somber and enduring value. Benavente paints love and life, sin and sorrow with the double-edged brush stroke of a super-artist's skill.

Echegaray in "Mariana" has drawn a remorseless portrait of Spanish womanhood. In "The Great Galeoto" he has created the eternal drama of Gossip, with its villainy, its destructive power. His

characters steal from his canvas with the quality of Goya, becoming caricature as well as character, and in the breadth of their individuality universal.

"The Great Galeoto" is tinged with human melancholy. Lustrous eyes ravaged by unfounded slander stare out at us in brooding grief. And Gossip, once started, moves with remorseless pace—until the dreary tale is told.

José Echegaray, a mathematician and an aristocrat, breathes into his puppets the note of life; then moves them to their destiny with unerring aim.

One sees them on his chess-board, seeming to move at will, yet knowing them to be pawns marshaled to their destiny.

Jacinto Benavente is of a different order. Brooding in his quiet study in the Calla Atocha high up above old Madrid, or dreaming out at the "Escurial," he fashions for us dramas of a Spanish Shakespeare. Plays not of Spain alone, but of human beings who wander into his proscenium from France, Monaco, Europe—from the entire world.

A symbolist of the quality of Maeterlinck, a satirist resembling Molière, a poet reminiscent of Verlaine —such is Jacinto Benavente.

Add to this an excellent technique in production, a flair for casting, a clairvoyance in character analysis,

and we have an outstanding personality in the theatres of the World, not only of Spain.

Benavente the man scans the stages of the world. He travels in many lands and studies many peoples —in city and country, on the streets, in brothels, in hovels, in palaces. His perceptions go to the root of actions, analyzing a courtesan as well as a princess. He is a charlatan in analysis, a magician in symbolism. He clothes his characters in the poverty of royal ermine or the splendor of tattered rags. His prostitutes stare out at life, enriched with the philosophy of experience; his princesses shiver in the high-walled and lonely gardens of their isolation. Every phrase of Benavente connotes something which he has *not* said. Underneath the poetic porphyry of his language flows a somnolent river. A river-bed of rich emotion, a philosophy which can only come from life.

Thus Imperia in "Saturday Night" becomes the dead ember of men's passions; the prostituted queen who has pawned her best currency in life. Donina, her daughter, is actually her own lost youth, whose recapture is the mad, insatiable motive of Imperia's existence. Leonardo is the artist who has loved his model so much that, like all artists, he has lost the human in the symbol. Across this mighty canvas of

Mrs Irma Kraft.

My dear Mrs Irma Kraft-

I did not forget the play- I wish to know if you will like a costume play- XVI ó XVII. century- Spain- I fear the rural play and also the society play, that is always the same, and everywhere

I wait for you answer to send you the title.

Yrs

J. Benavente

Madrid- 18- Oct 95.

Monte Carlo Benavente has thrown these world figures, examples of the eternal verities.

In "Autumnal Leaves" a group of old prostitutes, snatching at their memories as though they were the actual crumbs of their existence, recall the pomp of former days. Through their bleared eyes and from their aching voices comes the record of much giving, much knowledge of many men. Yet they are no more tragic than many mothers who have given lavishly and who, too, have been forgotten by these sons of men.

In "Princess Bebe" a royal lady would know of life. Abjuring her majestic station she goes out to live and learn. She learns that sorrow dwells not in palaces alone, and that like the "Young Prince Who Learned Everything Out Of Books" she must cling to her own people if she would find and keep her place in life.

Thus the human procession moves on, now turgidly, now blithely, before Benavente's watchful eyes. Moves under the sapphire canopy of France, in the palaces of the Riviera, or in majestic Old Madrid. Always there is the etcher's pencil. It cuts deep and scathingly. And it turns at times to mellow oil-chromes, luring, like Velasquez, the grandees from their lairs.

Always there is poetry. Quick-moving dialogue

clinging to swift, graceful forms like the chiffons and laces of Spanish ladies. Grandeur of movement, color, tone, beauty of background, and variety. A high vaulted palace hall, a wild and singing garden, the purple of an old river-bank or the bush on a lonely country road. The sodden background of a tavern in which the sound of drunken sailor's voices clashes harshly with the blasphemy of street-walker and thief.

Benavente is the Post-War poet-dramatist of a new Spain. Aiming at times, like Manuel Rivas in "Cobardias," to dramatize a crumbling aristocracy, at others, like Dos Quinteros, to paint human flowers, as in "Les Flores"; aiming, like Sierra, to give us, as in "Cradle Song," a glimpse of convent life; aiming always to paint, not the outer semblance, but the inner motivation, the ever-changing alchemy that is life.

Benavente, Sierra, Dos Quinteros are all excellent Stage Directors, and they have brought the art of acting in Spain to a high level. Catalena Barcena is an evidence of Sierra's training. She can rush from orphan girl to brilliant Queen in a few hours. She has with others raised the art of the Spanish stage to a high level. The acting of the "Spanish Players" in repertory is unusually proficient. They tour Spain, South America, the United States; and their

repertory is varied and intriguing. They attempt deep tragedy and illuminating comedy. Their methods are simple and their movements are in intense realistic accord with life. The Spanish actor is child-like, ingenuous, with an illuminating naïveté. Color and form and movement are so indigenous a part of Spanish life that the actor need only copy life to be dramatic. Yet Benavente, Manuel Rivas, and Sierra are not satisfied with copying the beautiful surface of life. They probe into the brooding melancholy which is so typical of Spain—the sigh hidden under a smile, the haunting memories under the most careless chatter.

Sierra gives us the crying multitude of women in the maternal nuns of "Cradle Song;" Rivas, the aching passion of a nation in the bitter badinage of "La Cobardias;" Benavente, a cynical query into the artificial economics of a people, their futility, in "Clouds." Above all, these men are artists. In every line, in every gesture. They group their actors into memorable stage pictures. Their language lends itself languidly to poetry, to passion, to tragedy. Spain is dramatic—irrevocably so.

Strangely enough, Spain, like Italy, has developed a rare cliche of intellectual dramatists. Men, such as Benavente, Dos Quinteros, Sierra, Manuel Rivas are not content to allow their queries to become sub-

merged by "atmosphere." Having lived in this atmosphere redolent of amours and passion all their lives they have ceased to be fascinated by it. Acknowledging it, they employ it to their ends as the subtle Cellini carved exquisite Florence into all that he did, or as Velasquez used the backgrounds of lovely churches to bring out the plaints in beggars' souls.

So these modern Spanish dramatists are rationalizing their beauty. Rivas depicts the whole crumbling grandeur of a nation in the fall of an aristocratic family. His satire is none the less poignant because he uses it exquisitely; and the ruins are none the less pathetic because the smoke rises amid "fluted copings." Dos Quinteros is none the less caustic in his comedies because they are thrown against the backgrounds of enticing old Madrid. "Les Flores" becomes a pageant not of the seasons, but of modern Spanish life.

And Sierra sings his "Cradle Song" not only of a remote old Spanish convent where yellow sunlight lights up lovely patterns on the wall, but of the Mother Song of all nuns, everywhere. Nuns whose mother-hearts must pour themselves into the epic of one baby-orphan girl, because their religion denies them fuller channels. Sierra bids us pause and think about convents and nuns and mother in-

stinct. And his work is none the less important because it is so exquisitely done.

Benavente, perhaps most of all, has employed all the aids which Spain offers so lavishly. Benavente uses backgrounds replete with passion. He stages his scenes in the loveliest of high-walled gardens, or in the most hectic of wayside taverns with their shifting prisms of raw color. Benavente clothes the actions of his people with the finesse of the decorator, with the skill of the gifted scenic artist, yet coolly he penetrates to the hidden motives in men's minds. He analyzes and psycho-analyzes. His dialogue conceals rather than betrays. His are the double-edged universal aphorisms such as the great Shakespeare scattered through his pages. Benavente uses language sparingly, impregnating it with original thought.

Strangely enough, also the actors in these Spanish dramas often persuade us that they are unconscious of the two-fold meaning of their dialogue. They live and love, lust and die, without seeming to interpret the utter significance of what they have done. Often the stranger in their theatres does not catch the universal values at the moment. Long afterwards the "Great Galeoto" returns in full force, or the fine frenzy of "Imperia" discloses the universality of her disease.

Few of us have learned to understand the symbolism of modern Spain, its subtle portent. Few of us have learned to read the message behind the beauty of the picture.

Thus modern Spain spells a new art in the theatre —the art that conceals art, that aims with the frail brush of Symbolism to paint life as it is known and lived. That shows us the actor simply himself, in response to the suggestive dramatist, walking out from hovel or courtyard, from street or palatial home, the actor, who in gesture, costume, exclamation, seems to stroll out of life as he has always lived it.

A colorful segment of the theatre, this Spanish drama as interpreted by actors to whom impersonation is the breath of living. In the romantic Alhambras of their beautiful country they have for centuries lived the passion and the emotion which is dramatic Spain.

CATALINA BÁRCENA

ERNESTO VILCHES

SCENE FROM "LA CENA DELLE BEFFE"

"THE JEST" BY SAM BENELLI

VIII: ITALY – THE MENTAL GYMNAST

The psychology of a nation is so easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. Thus we generalize about all Italians, classing them as amorists, who deal only in terms of visible beauty and the emotions of the senses. Because Italy itself is and has always been a canvas of magnificent proportions, painted by a Master Hand, we conclude that its poets and its dramatists must be romancers—without too great concern with the intellect.

As a matter of fact, Italian drama, of the moment, is intensely intellectual. Given a tremendous fillip by Gabriel D'Annunzio, only a few short decades ago, it has plunged into more intricate mazes of analysis today under the sheer genius of Pirandello.

In order to thoroughly understand this Post-War Italian drama one must know a little of the caliber of the present-day Italian people. Under the stern régime of Mussolini, intellectual progress has been declared the order of the day, and to restore Rome to its former cultural glory is the avowed precept of Fascismo.

Thus, from out the purple-shadowed passages

near old St. Paul serious students gather, studying with zeal architecture, painting, literature, drama. Questions of the day are discussed in every quarter, on the heights of the Aventine Hill, in the courtyard of the British Academy in Rome, under red and yellow awnings at "The Cafe de Roma," and behind scenes in the new Municipal Theatre—everywhere.

And drama, from having been a dead-letter, a hollow reiteration of the classics, has come to be the clarion note of a new nation, interested in science, in politics, and in the eternal flux of modal standards.

Though exquisite productions of opera, musical ballets, plays with music, and tawdry translations of French Boulevard plays still abound in the larger as well as the smaller cities of Italy, there are also the new Pirandello Theatres with their new and brilliant methods of acting and production; with a new interest on the part of audiences in the most recent developments of Italian drama of today.

Before we plunge into the plays of the Master Dramatist of modern Italy, it is well to pause for a moment with Dario Nicodemi. America has known a few of his lesser plays, "Stolen Fruit," which pleased many audiences; "The Greater Passion," and many more, at the Italian Theatre on Fourteenth Street. Nicodemi can write interesting plays with

clever, carefully, dovetailed plots. He is a man of the theatre and has an intuitive romantic flare for the pathetic situation. His incidents coincide almost too artfully and his themes usually work out to satisfactory conclusions. But despite his ability to entertain large audiences, Nicodemi has been of little value in the progress of Italian drama. He is of the school of the inexhaustible Scribe and can pour out plots *ad infinitum*. But few, if any, of his plays approach reality. His work bristles with an appalling array of stereotyped characters, yet with the same facility as our own Owen Davis, he amuses and pleases. His work resembles the highly colored picture posters of a factory girl's existence.

The guiding genius of Italy today, in direction, acting and staging, is Luigi Pirandello, whose mind in its universality resembles Benavente's. Pirandello also roams the world, prowling around its stages, studying its methods and reading endlessly the dramas of his own and other lands.

To this mental gymnast, to this man who has introduced new ructions into the theatre, to this dauntless Italian Bernard Shaw, belongs the glory of Post-War Italian drama. For he does not hesitate to rush into the circus of the world's emotions, and from its highest trapeze balance himself while he surveys physical and spiritual reactions.

It is in the brain that Pirandello finds his most valuable material. He demolishes the aged axiom that only physical action can be dramatic; and demonstrates that mental action, a new vision, the dream of a poor "nobody's soul" can be as good material for drama as a train wreck, or an explosion. He is a mixture of Zola and of Shaw.

Pirandello definitely destroys the charge of Italy's sentimentality. He is emotional. Yes, but with the spiritual emotions of a latter-day Hamlet—as when in "Henry IV" he wrote "that man is mad only according to his fellows." The eternal problem "To be or not to be"—is again voiced in this most metaphysical of Italian plays. For the madness of the young Henry continuing voluntarily, long after he knows himself to be sane, is a latter-day retreat from the world's realism, harsh, hateful, difficult to be borne. Pirandello's Henry differs from Hamlet only in his delight in forcing his tormentors to tear off their masks; and having torn them off, to live on in the knowledge of their perfidy. Where Shakespeare destroys the bodies and souls of his traitors, Pirandello destroys their intellects; and forces them to live, hungry, naked, lost!

Again the theme of madness appears in "Right You Are If You Think You Are," but this time more in the Austrian methods of Schnitzler or Freud, the

psycho-analyzation of abnormal emotionalism. Man is mad in this storm-wracked earth of tears and laughter, mad in the eyes of his neighbors, at times even of himself. These plays come from a laboratory, where a poetic scientist has mixed them, like Shelley, with a passion for the changeless elements of Mankind!

Perhaps the outstanding attribute of Pirandello is the fearlessness with which he introduces new dramatic material into the theatre. And like Shaw, he not only satirizes himself, but seizes his characters literally by the hair, announcing, as in "Six Characters in Search of an Author," that living humans carry their own dramatic material, seeking only a pen-man to turn it into words.

Pirandello is Italian, typical of the most dramatic recent trend in Italy. Only a nation which has numbered its Cellinis, its Leonardos, its D'Annunzios, its Puccinis, the orchestrators of a thousand mysterious rhythms, only such a nation could have evolved a Pirandello.

In the originality and bravura of his dramatic material, he has not surpassed his qualities as Stage Director. In the three theatres, now established at Rome, Turin, and Milan, and subsidized by Mussolini, Pirandello has demonstrated his fearlessness of execution.

Three complete Repertory Companies, skilled actors, trained by Pirandello himself, perform a dozen plays, his own and recent works of Italian or Continental dramatists, rotate from city to city, so that each place will be assured of a continuous repertory of good plays.

To properly understand his technique, one need only see a rehearsal by Pirandello, virile, emotional, insistent upon every action, surcharged with intention. Here is an original thinker; the play is unmistakably his from its beginning to its conclusion. His aim is to mirror thought in life—complex Italian thought. Mind over matter. The drama as it works itself out to its conclusion. No greater contrast in interpretation can be imagined than the play "Naked" produced under Pirandello's direction in Rome and the same play produced in New York City by Augustin Duncan. Under Pirandello, "Naked" became a shining symbol. Poor Ersilia Drei, the half-starved governess, unimportant in life as in death, unnoticed by anybody, could be the flagrant symbol of so many whom we all know. The fringe of humanity, shabby and frayed. The mongrel door-mat of many of our lives. And as she cries out in her death agony, "That I wanted only to die dressed and you have forced me to die 'naked,' " the lack of clothes becomes the symbol of

her shabby soul. As it was written and produced by Pirandello it partook of some of the symbolism of Ibsen, much like poor little Hedvig in "The Wild Duck." It is partly because of this resemblance to the realism of the Norse dramatist, that we must accord Pirandello a high place in present day drama.

Whether his dramatic conceptions will endure is a question for the future. That he has placed the drama in Italy, its composition and its execution on a high plane no one can deny. That he has come from a clear Italian sky, with the speed of an unexpected comet can also not be denied. He is drawing a stencil, clear and poignant, across the rich dramatic page of modern Italy.

Pirandello began as a poet. His first volume of verse, "Mal Giocondo," was published in 1889. His first volume of prose followed in 1894, and its title tells its contents, "Love with Love." Then there came innumerable short stories such as "The Two Sons," "Letters Written to a Dead Friend up to the Time of Marrying His Widow," and "The Fan," in which a poor deserted woman with a child, spends her last cent on a paper fan on a hot day. These are all truly Pirandellian in theme.

A critic, with the world's literature in mind, cannot estimate Pirandello without some reservations. It is the more important therefore, to appraise his

merits justly. His chief merit is perhaps, his inexhaustible vivacity in describing persons and scenes, and in presenting queer twists in ordinary human relationships which bring about unexpected clashes. With all his facility, however, he does not rely upon the hackneyed stock-in-trade of our popular writers; "lovers' hearts—mothers' tears—the struggle for commercial success — sensational adventure — the tracking of crime—or the morals of smart society!" He has, without effort, kept his work on a higher plane, while losing nothing in the way of immediate appeal. Helped, no doubt, by his Latin temperament, he has never been scared by the bogey of other people's illusions, he goes, in fact to the opposite direction. His characters are ordinary people like ourselves—moved by ordinary impulses; and he sees no reason to disfigure them in the false light of a futile sentimentality. His men and women, with all their quaintness of expression and the oddities of habits or dress, their pathetic blindness to the pitfalls of existence, come to consciousness with a remarkable spontaneity, their story, one might say, already "hung around their necks."

In one of his essays he writes: "It has long been my custom, every Sunday morning to give audience to the characters of my future dramas. Five hours, from eight until one o'clock! It nearly always hap-

pens that I find myself in bad company. I do not know why, but there usually come to these audiences of mine the most discontented people in the world, people afflicted by strange ills, involved in the most remarkable set of circumstances, with whom it is really painful to deal."

These words are not an exaggeration. All the work of Pirandello bears them out. He sees his imaginary characters as plainly as he sees beings of flesh and blood. From this extraordinary immediacy of impression comes his freshness and power of delineation. From it, too, comes often his failure to penetrate beyond this first superficial reality; and his willingness, in ironic contemplation of his odd company, to rest contented with an attitude toward life of derisive skepticism. This is at first diverting, but it reveals before long his essential spiritual poverty.

The best of Pirandello's comedy, from an artistic point of view, is undoubtedly that which comes to him from rustic life,—and in this he is not unique among Italian authors. No one can study Italian fiction for long and not realize that the life of the village is its truest and strongest inspiration. Those charming "paesti" of Italy with white-washed walls and red-tiled roofs, nestling around a graceful campanile in every fold of the hills, whose beauty awakens the admiration of every traveler, are, as every

traveler does not realize, the stronghold of national life. Land-owning is a national occupation, not merely an industry. The cultivation of vines, olives, and the corn on the "poder," the preservation of its tenure, the distaste of its loss, the hope of adding to it by thrift, its importance in marriage and inheritance, these are matters in which every Italian, at first or second hand, is vitally interested. Hence the basic value of rural drama in Italy, and the firm rooting of the theatre in the core and heart of national life.

The audiences of sophisticated Rome relish their Pirandello and in many ways adore him. They are much like the audiences in his plays, and argue, heatedly, in and around the theatre, overflowing on to the sidewalks. A theme is a matter for general discussion, and if the audience differs with the author, it does not hesitate to berate him loudly in none too complimentary terms. Audiences are hectic and interesting. One cannot "sleep" in comfort. Arguments infringe on one's inertia.

Chiarelli, and half of the younger Italian dramatists—Antonelli, Lopez, San Secondo—have been strongly influenced by Pirandello, but without success. Even Bracco, in his newest play "Pazzi" has abandoned the French model which he finds no longer popular in Italy; but while striving to repro-

duce the atmosphere of the grotesque he has failed to attain what audiences are accustomed to find in Pirandello. There is, however, one young Sicilian, Posso di San Secondo, on whom the mantle of Pirandello fits more gracefully. San Secondo has had productions in the United States—"The Stairs" and "Puppets"—neither attaining popularity, yet the actual failure lay perhaps in the lack of our perception and not in Secondo's subtlety. In his play "What Passions You Have," he has achieved a real Pirandellian success. His work seems to indicate that the grotesque is not merely a passing fad, the expression of one man's personality, but the unfoldment, through the drama, of the mind of the Italian people in their Post-War development.

Italian actors possess a subtlety in common with the French and Spanish. Their actions more often conceal inner passions than betray them.

The play, as in Spain, begins late, and is performed in beautiful theatres, accompanied by good music. The drama is an indulgence for the most part of rich and cultivated classes, although there are many Variétés and music halls for the less wealthy. Italian audiences also argue and blaspheme, taking the play into everyday life and discussing it long into the morning. Continental dramas, except French are

rarely translated; although Pirandello has produced some of O'Neill's plays in Rome.

Audience, play, actor, author, are housed in fine theatres. Italy is nothing, if not artistic. Artistic in the compelling languor of a lovely actress's eyes, in the grace of a young actor's movements, in the gestures of an audience, where out of the shadows they think and dream and move and live! Italians are always good to look upon, whether yesterday in the historic Coliseum or today in the beautiful "Teatro della Roma."

IX: NORWAY – THE STOIC

Modern Norway takes its drama as neutrally as War. It is difficult to believe that any occurrence could arouse the Norwegian from his ordinary phlegm. The calm country of the North is as cool as its deep fiords; and ruminates majestically but quietly over the dramas made by Man.

Yet Norway has produced Henrik Ibsen—Olympian and human, Björnsen Björnsen deep and stirring, and Selma Lagerlöf who probes the heart of man and child—alike.

Audiences in Norway are as quiet as the streets of her cities. With an air, always of apologetic enjoyment, they file quietly into well-built theatres and discuss politics or business, almost anything but drama, in the wide promenoirs, which, like all the other theatres of Europe, afford every facility for eating and drinking.

Ibsen continues to be the perennial and universal favorite. The country that exiled him, the people who drove him, poor and pathetic into Germany and Italy, have now a continuous welcome for his plays. There are few thrills comparable to seeing

"The Wild Duck" in Norwegian—little Hedvig played by a Norwegian child of deep understanding —and the older characters in the flesh—as they might have stepped over the threshold of Ibsen's study a few years ago.

The tempo of acting in Norway is admirably adapted to the plays. These people seem not so much to be trained to the ways of the stage as to walk *out* from the frames of their own doorways and to walk *into* the plays. Drama moves along quietly. The Norwegian "Hedda Gabbler" makes the imitations of other countries seem tarnished and tawdry. Yet, in the dim shadows of the stage, one is lost to reality and plunges, irrevocably, into illusion.

Norway need have done nothing except produce Ibsen. The man who revolutionized drama—who blazed before an astounded world the path to the newer truths. The giant before whom the plays of Sardou and the artificial dramas of the early eighties languished like sick children. The man before whom critics weakened—after they had hurled their bombs of ridicule, and had them spring back at them like boomerangs.

Ibsen who preached sermons—dramatized theses —the man who pointed the finger of truth at life, tearing away a thousand tissues of ridiculous evasions. The inspiration of Brieux, of Hauptman, of

Shaw, of George Brandes—the pioneer of the new and the true in England—the Continent and America.

There has been no more powerful single influence on the drama of today than Henrik Ibsen. The little man, with the great head, sitting at his favorite café in Oslo, watching the world stream by, or toiling with a play among the monks at Amalfi, or extradited to antagonistic Germany; there bringing "Ghosts" and the mighty "Brand" into being—this little man is the "Grand Old Man" of Modern Drama. Through him a woman first found the road to her own life and Nora became not only a refugée from a "Doll's House" but the pioneer of the Suffrage Movement of today.

Through him the doctrine of hereditary disease fought out its battle amid the rage of the publican and the sinner. And dread syphilis which had never been mentioned on any stage, burned its agony into the consciousness of man. Through him, Hedda Gabbler displayed the rancorous core of a beautiful woman born to bring destruction to the heart of man. Through him the zeal of the "missionary" pierced its fanatical way in the soul of "Brand," tearing itself insanely into the lives of his parishioners. Through him the New Generation came knocking at the door, and the Master Builder staring out over the village of his youth is impelled to his own destruction.

Through Ibsen "The Pillars of Society" crash and crumble and "The League of Youth" prognosticates a new era amid the abuses of society. "The Lady of the Sea" beckons through a mist of nebulous beauty and "When We Dead Awaken" tells a story of a dreaming artist, who could not bear to see his dream alive. Through him in "Rosmersholm" we see the anguish and destruction of a guilty couple who have bought their security at the cost of their common guilt. And through him again, we have the spiritual beauty of a "Wild Duck," born to fly not too far from home.

Though Norway gave birth to Ibsen, his heritage came also from Germany and Ireland. The depths of his passion seem not to be Norwegian—rather a mixture of the Teuton and the Celt. Yet the quiet of the Norse country was necessary to lay its cool white fingers on the aching heart and feverish head of the man who knew and loved his people. With a knowledge, almost uncanny, of the heart of man, Ibsen saw and suffered—and wrote with a pen dipped in the ink of eternal understanding.

Ibsen's technique has been the marvel of innumerable dramatists. His clear, sharp dialogue, his incisive delineation of character, the beauty of his economy and the economy of his beauty caused a revolution in the drama. Henry Arthur Jones and

A. W. Pinero turned a new page from him in England—Gerhart Hauptman and Suderman in Germany; and, across the Atlantic, the United States broke into ecstatic applause and welcome for the great Norwegian!

George Brandes and William Archer have declared that Ibsen is the greatest dramatic influence of the nineteenth century. Jeanette Lee has traced the symbolism of his characters in a thoughtful and accurate analysis of his plays. "The Wild Duck" becomes more important than a tiny, imprisoned duck in an attic; Hedda Gabbler's pistols become more valuable than toys for her to play with; Nora dances the tarantella, not only because she is wild for pleasure, but because it is the symbol of her arid, aching life; and the Master Builder hears youth knocking at his door, not only as a beautiful maiden, but as the next generation, which dare not be denied.

In stage craft, Ibsen has been surpassed by none. Sitting sternly in the dark theatre, he noted every move of every actor. A master of simplicity, insistent upon details, the trifles which build up verisimilitude in the theatre, he has given us a gallery of portraits, painted like the great Rembrandt from the shadows of old Amsterdam.

None before Ibsen had insisted upon realism—none, more since. Old Solness—Thorvald—Oswald

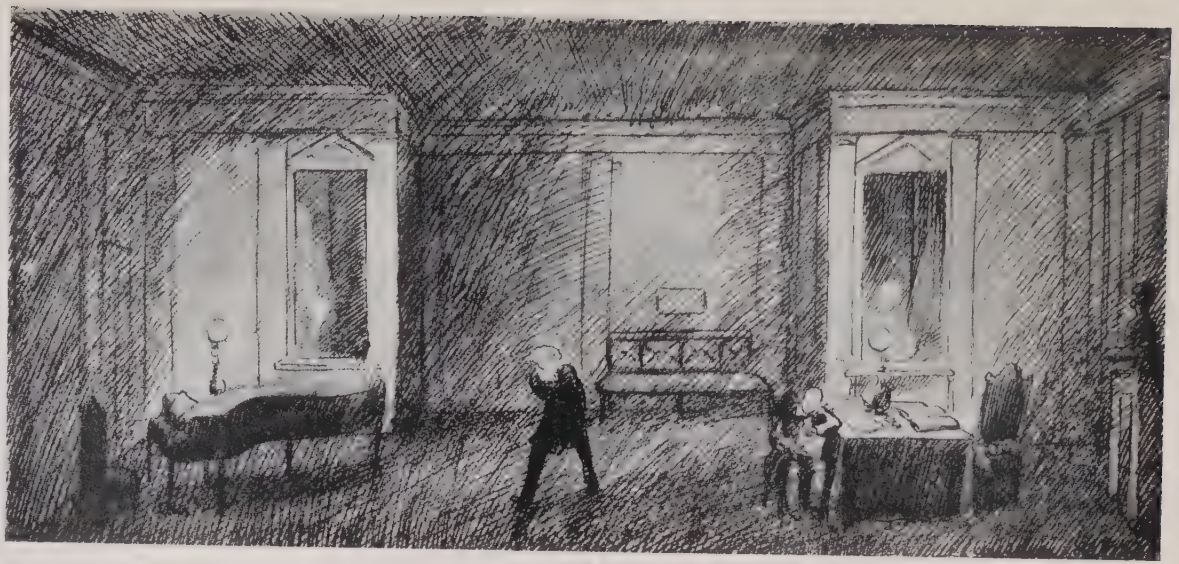
—Hedda—Rebecca—Pastor Manders—Mrs. Alving —Peer Gynt—these and a score of others pass before our memories—accurate in every detail, informed by life itself.

Ibsen's stage directions are concrete, explicit, modern. He is economical of words and slaves endlessly for rigid description and definition of character. And, in his plot construction, he would not be swerved from life.

When the critics, howling with rage, denounced the gloom, the morbidity, the misery of "Ghosts," and clamored for happy endings for Hedda or Nora or Mrs. Alving, Ibsen disdained to answer them, relapsing into complete silence. Bernard Shaw has compiled in the "Quintessence of Ibsenism," a group of the criticisms of the day. Noted critics, who in prominent journals denounced Ibsen as decadent, insane, polluted, pointed to "Ghosts" one of the great dramas of all time, as the fetid product of a degenerate mind.

Yet the little man in the secluded beauty of Italy or in far-off Germany wrote and waited. With a Norse patience, he knew that he had written about life and for life; and that some day the world would listen.

Few countries could produce more than one Ibsen. Yet Björnsen Björnsen has written some realistic and



"JOHN GABRIEL BJORKMAN"

moving dramas—which are often produced in Norway—loved and applauded by audiences all over Europe.

If in the silent peace of the North, one great dramatist has come into being, we can ask no more. It is as if Mother Norway, herself, brooding through the centuries and peering down upon the hectic passions of mankind has finally brought to life this Super-Dramatist.

Ruminating over the qualities of his people—whose crimes and loves were so symbolic of people—everywhere, Ibsen divined the enduring things in World Drama.

He dipped his pen into the blood of life. He felt the pulse of man. And he wrote not in poetry, nor in invoked nebulous and expressionistic fashion, but in the rich, ripe language of every-day man.

To him drama spelled itself in realism. His poetry was the discovery of human beings to themselves; the great onward surge of the spirit.

From him Gerhart Hauptman gleaned his "Lonely Lives." Yet Ibsen wrote endlessly of lonely lives—human beings groping through a morass of misunderstandings—struggling through a mist of false convention—weighted down and dying in wrong atmospheres—and rushing in the end, like

Rebecca, into a mill stream which should drown all reason.

Yes, Ibsen let a clean, white shaft of reason into the drama of today. He held aloft his torch of truth, unfalteringly. It shines endlessly into the crevasses of his own and other days.

* * * * * * *

Norwegian drama is housed in spacious playhouses, well-built and adapted to secure comfort. Reading desks with little lamps are everywhere, wide aisles open upon promenoirs with perfect café facilities. Theatre, audiences, actors are dignified, poised, calm. Rarely stirred to passion. Discussing the play quietly, seldom becoming excited about anything.

Foreign drama creeps in slowly. Translations are made with infinite care. Shakespeare is a great favorite and Shaw, and in the last few years, the "Anna Christie" of the American O'Neill.

There are no gorgeous musical comedies—but there is much good music. Norwegians adore Opera, Ballets, Concerts and Plays with music. But productions are always conservative as though Nature's grandeur had formed a background too powerful for contrast.

Norwegians are conservative in their drama in their art—in their lives. Never hectic. Their actors portray with reason. Ratiocination dominates actor,

audience, author. The theatre becomes a sane and thoughtful mirror of Norse national life.

And there is the grandeur of truth. The background of sanity. The sagas of the Norseland have the beauty of Vikings and are valid foundation for great poetry and for drama of sincere exaltation.

One is impressed with the search for truth in Norway—with its dramatic conservatism. One values the expression of passion which has been thoroughly informed.

X: AUSTRIA – THE ÆSTHETE

The Austrians possess finesse and an intuitive sense of the artistic. Their love of art is an integral part of their lives. Music, sculpture, painting, literature, drama are pursued with the zeal of the æsthete. Their love of beauty permeates their existence. Homes are filled with good literature, and the theatre is a nightly diversion. Tyrolean peasants trudge for miles on stony highways, sometimes for days, to attend the Salzburg Festival, the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau, or the Music Festivals at Bayreuth and Munich. Tiny villages in the Schwarzwald have their native orchestras and little playhouses. Villagers never tire of the immortal music of Mozart and Beethoven, of the classics of Schiller, and great Religious Dramas. It would appear that a nation so dedicated cannot easily become grossly materialistic. When play and concert are part of the daily existence, men cease to regard money as of paramount importance.

Austria is becoming rapidly rehabilitated. Since the War, men have come to think more of the stabilization of their freedom as much as of their currency, and to regard their independence as of vital

value. Yet during this period of reconstruction Art has not suffered. Rather have the theatres, closed during that tragic period, become more important and attractive.

One marvels at the theatres themselves. In Vienna and in Munich, which, lying so close to the German and Austrian border-line is essentially Austrian, in Salzburg, Buda Pesth, in little Prague, there are to be found some of the most interesting playhouses in the world. One can stand in the entrance court of the Royal Burg Theatre in Vienna and picture again the glory of Franz Joseph and the glitter of a première in the days of the First Empire; or one can wander down to the comfortable Raimund Theatre and see a memorable play directed by Karl Heinz Martin.

These theatres are more than playhouses. They possess spaces for ample promenades—and are adorned with tapestries, paintings, and marbles. They are equipped with wide staircases, soft cushioned loges, thick velvet carpets, comfortable seats, and an atmosphere, restful and regal, that make theatre-going a matter of charm and ease.

The tasks of the day are arranged so as not to interfere with early performances. Most theatre owners cater to patrons who may reside at some distance from the city and who dare not return home too late.

The interest in play and player is intense. As in Germany, the première of a well-known author becomes an event of civic importance. And Ferenc Molnar, Melchior Lengyel, Arthur Schnitzler, Karel Kapek, Franz Czokor, Ernst Toller, Lazos Lakatos, Ernst Vajda are known to every person at all interested in the drama.

There is an air of fantasy which is peculiarly Viennese. Vienna, a sophisticated capital, formerly as gay as Paris, is slowly returning to power. Life in Vienna scintillates. The streets, cafés, parks, orchestras, all are alive with *lebensfreud*. Life spells leisure. We scheme to finish business quickly so that we can while away the hours with these happy Viennese.

The most serious thinking in the theatre is expressed artistically. Arthur Schnitzler is typical of Austria. Leaving behind him his clever bachelor philosophy in "Anatol" he has plunged into symbolism in "The Green Cockatoo" or analysis in "Fraulein Elsa." Schnitzler represents ultra-modern Vienna. Life may be seriously psycho-analyzed, but one must always be artistic.

In the land of Freud, Jung, and Mayer life becomes a matter of subtle emotions. Austria stretches out mental fingers to grasp the intangible, the elusive,

but the fingers are always graceful and there are always beautiful gestures.

Hence we can correlate the talent of Ferenc Molnar with a people who demand charm. "Liliom" may have soared into the metaphysical, but the "Court of the Beyond" needed to be skilfully portrayed. These seemingly heavy beer-drinking Viennese have their inner sanctums which house an intense love for beauty.

Molnar and Schnitzler have long been the darlings of the Austrian public. Schnitzler, a physician, delving always more deeply into the inner consciousness and becoming less satisfied with the obvious, the author, who knows his art in color and form, can correlate his word pictures to the newer schools of art which try to express emotional reaction in strange intangible movements.

The new Schnitzler is the creator of "Dr. Bernhardi" and "Dreams." One doubts whether this Schnitzler could return to the days of the frivolous "Anatol." The War surged over and around him, letting in the light of a new day, disclosing new and startling dramatic values.

And Molnar, the æsthete, the sophisticated writer for the theatre seems to become more amusing and less intense. The husband of the charming Lilli Darvas, he writes plays for and around her, and has

amused countless audiences with "The Play's the Thing."

Molnar is an expert man of the theatre. His situations have the rapier thrust of dramatic certainty. He has the eternal love for the fairy-tale; his poor royal "Swan," who dared not love humanly, his "Guardsman," who swaggered to the joy of endless audiences, his vagabond "Liliom," who, in his brusque piracy, concealed much philosophy, much knowledge of life.

Yet Molnar has disappointed his keenest admirers. Many believe that he has not improved with the years, nor fulfilled the promise of early greatness. Many others believe that Molnar was never a genius. An expert producer, a dispenser of brilliant dialogue, fascinating situation, and tricky dénouement, his philosophy seems often to be the blatant and shop-worn patter of the sophisticated drawing-room, and his creatures do not search the stars for greater wisdom. Molnar has resisted the onward march of dramatic progress. He does not bow to the newer Expressionism, nor seek strange and daring novelty. His is rather the conservative talent of a writer content with the finesse of the Salon, the savoir-faire of the Court.

Of a very different order is Karel Kapek. Peering through thick spectacles over high test tubes in a

chemical laboratory, Kapek writes plays as an amusement for his leisure hours. His dramas are of the laboratory, synthetically constructed, filled with prophecy. Less the drama of the theatre, more the drama of the scientist. Yet "R. U. R.," "The Insect World," and "The Makropoulos Secret" have moments of intense power and situations of alluring and original charm. Kapek's "Robots" live today, but dream of tomorrow. His themes are torn from the essential problems of existence. He pauses only long enough in the theatre to pander to its laws. His technique is highly individual and original, and he does not haunt dressing rooms or appear at "First Nights." One senses that his drama is more a medium of expression and less an end in itself. Kapek discloses startling situations. His plays make great demands upon the actors, yet actors like to play them because many of their atrophied talents are called sharply back into use. Kapek's theory is that one should be not only a dramatist, but that literature should be related to some vocation, since through that vocation one gleans the values that the drama needs. Kapek is of rare value today.

Ernst Toller, recently released from prison where he had been confined because, as Minister of Justice, he evinced too great a sympathy with Socialism, has done brilliant work in Austrian drama. While in his

prison-cell he wrote poetry and drama. Later he developed into an expert stage director, possessed of startling originality. Toller wrote "Masse-Mensch," that singing epoch of the workman, of the laborer half-crazed with sweat and blood. He wrote "Henkemann," another fiery panegyric on the sobbing soul of the worker made impotent by the War. Toller knows the laborer and the peasant, his suffering, his pathetic childish joys. He knows his *Bier-Stube* and *Wein-Keller*, where toilers sing and drink, loaf and live. His soul is saddened by the poverty of the men who make "the works go round." Like O'Neill, he sings the song of the stoker. Drama means to Ernst Toller the opportunity to open the door and let the light stream through. A light into an underworld about which we know so little. The light streams on the bodies of twisted sweating, cursing, reeking workmen. These are God's creatures. Our brothers. How do we treat them? Their souls, their bodies? Their women bearing babies? What sort of world would we have without them? They who forge our ships, our cars, who drive the engines for us? They who make *our* world go round? What sort of babies do we expect these women to hand down to posterity when their suffering bodies must go on toiling within the very pangs of child-birth?

The talent of Toller is grim and serious, deep-shadowed and fundamental. Yet he has a strange and eerie humor, as in the scene outside the circus in "Henkemann" when we see the crowds drift by laughing at the poor naked hero. Toller has a two-fold talent. As stage director he has given Vienna some of her newest and most important productions. He experiments with Shakespeare and with "Turandot," with Schiller and Wedekind. He plays with planes of light and color and brings some important expressionism to the modern Austrian stage.

The stage direction of Toller fits in harmoniously with that of the wizard, Karl Heinz Martin. Who that has seen Martin's production of "Francesca" at the Raimund Theatre can ever forget it? A matter of a winding staircase, of a grouping of actors, shimmering draperies and startling colors, a matter of wizardry in lighting, of a soft poetic delicacy in tone and movement. Martin is individual and highly original. His art is like none other. Young and fearless, snapping his fingers at convention, he combines certain qualities of the Russian with the high poetry of the German. Still a young man—we may expect much of Martin.

Austria welcomes all that is new and experimental in stage production, in lighting, costuming, scenic sets, and acting. Austrian actors are artistic and tireless.

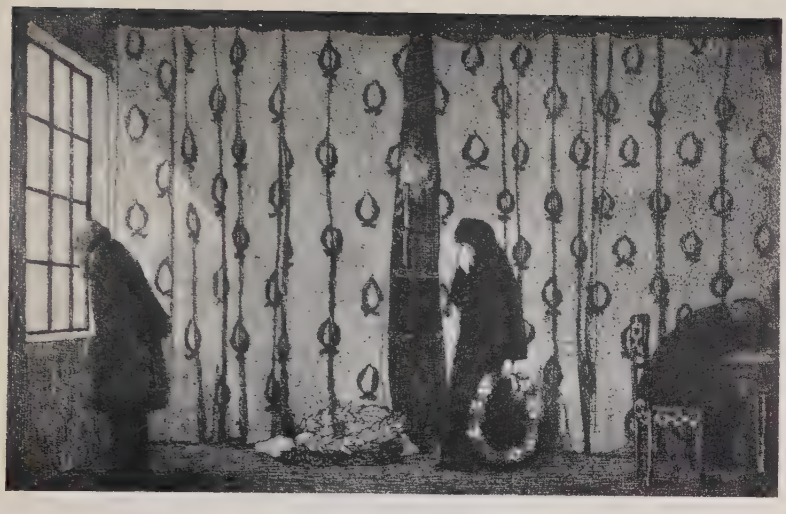
There are many Repertory Theaters, with residential companies, and acting improves continuously under expert stage direction.

Melchior Lengyel has acted, directed, written. Today he confines his attention only to drama. Yet in the days of "The Typhoon" and "Antonia," Lengyel had much to do with production. With consummate skill in plot and dialogue, Lengyel belongs to Molnar's school; and knows his theatre of sophistication.

Audiences in Austria, as in Germany, regard the drama as of the greatest importance. Prices still seem high to the Viennese; while to the American they are abnormally cheap. A Viennese must make some sacrifices before he buys his theatre ticket; and once seated in the theatre he listens carefully and expresses his approval or disapproval forcefully.

A "First Night" in Vienna is not soon forgotten. Arriving at the theatre through huge crowds near the entrance one finds the most intense excitement within. The audience throngs the promenades or remains standing until the very moment that the curtain rises. Monocles are worked continuously to see dresses and personages, and curtain calls may prolong the play long into the morning.

Theatre-going in Austria is a joy. One values the



"MICHAEL KRAMER" BY HAUPTMANN

"THE MACHINE WRECKERS" BY ERNST TOLLER

"THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

sheer happiness, the artistry of this gay country, the ease and sparkle, the debonair appreciation.

Drama is a miniature of life. Dainty, high colored, gold encased. Vienna becomes once more the mistress of Europe. Yet this joy and sparkle do not interfere with high and serious dramatic thinking.

XI: GERMANY – THE ANALYST

As a people the Germans are the antithesis of their dramatic art. Slow in movement and expression, heavy in gesture and in all that concerns their lives, in their food, in business, yet they have produced a drama that exists as a constant contradiction to themselves.

Nowhere in the world is novelty welcomed more quickly than in Germany. Stage directors, authors, actors, all welcome the new, the strange, the violent. It is in the land of the "Niebelungen Ring" that the newest Expressionism was born. And the traditional echoes of Cosima Wagner's Festival at Bayreuth collide with the latest experiments of Max Reinhardt's Drama Festival in Salzburg.

It is only when we seek beneath the placid, heavy exterior of the German, when we probe deeply enough, that we begin to discover the young, experimental quality of his mind. It is from this fecund, intellectual soil that the great Schiller sprang, and Goethe; that Heine and Lessing, Hauptman and Suderman, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer came into being; and in these latter days, Frank Wedekind,

Franz Werfel, Francis Langer, Walter Hasenclever, Leopold Jessner, and Max Reinhardt.

Hence we learn to discount the external, the slow tempo of the German motion. We learn to appreciate the thoroughness of knowledge, the infinite patience, the dramatic artistry which, for all its lack of speed, touches lightly and firmly at the mainsprings of existence.

The War caused a long and sighing interval in German drama. During this poignant period German dramatists armed machine guns or brooded in alien prison cells. And from the rivers of the battlefields streamed the blood of many directors, composers, authors, actors. The old dramatic art of Germany faded irrevocably. Gerhart Hauptman became a symbol of past decades. The virulence of "The Weavers" is the slogan of yesterday's socialists, and Herman Suderman's most advanced ideas on marriage became a by-word for the morality of an age gone by.

The War killed conventional drama. The walls of accustomed dwellings gave way. Man looked through roofless houses or, crouching in abandoned dug-outs of the enemy, sought God and the stars gropingly.

Conventions were demolished. Not only the convention of the holiness of marriage, the purity of

virgins, and the simplicity of life in many forms, but dramatic conventions which, scarcely able to breathe under the pressure of by-gone technique, sought new methods of expression to relieve man's torment.

Man sought the beyond. Drama became the vehicle for the passions of the moment.

Man sought new forms to voice these passions. The theatre became a crucible from which writers peered and probed and suffered, struggling to express the new problems of existence.

Dwellings collapsed and were abandoned. Not only the dwelling houses of the cities but the mental dwellings of dramatists which had housed them in their former calm and sure existences.

Franz Werfel seeking drama in allegory and symbolism in the obscure, poetic reaches of his fables, aimed to tell the story of prince and peasant, of laborer and poet.

Frank Wedekind beheld the heart of youth. In "Frühlings Erwachen" he saw the young sap rise and fall in the blood of maidens. He dreamed the story of "Francesca"—the girl who would see all of life, who clamored for truth and would accept no substitute.

George Kaiser saw giant cities rise in smoke fumes —the God of the Machine in "Gas." Before his startled eyes the bodies of half-naked workmen

chant an orgy of virulent Expressionism. He saw, too, mankind in "Nebeneinander" living beside each other, yet knowing nothing of themselves. He saw in pathos and in passion the bleakness of men's lives.

Form was broken up in its entirety—act form and scene form. Dramatists experimented with plays of continuous action, with curtainless theatres, with scenes set in various rooms of one house, or in houses next door to each other, showing the continuous interaction and movements of many lives.

Walter Hasenclever experimented in "Beyond" with plays of two characters only. And because his story was the drama of their inner lives he needed no more characters. Again, he experimented with the conscience of a murderer, and his headless hero became a symbol of the guilt of all mankind. His strange fantastic humor grows weird in symbolism. We see in this gifted dramatist a harbinger of greater works.

He is a prophet of young Germany. His mental house is without walls or roof or boundary of any kind. He looks down on man, often as on puppets. He looks up at God as the engineer, the manipulator of these little symbolic figures.

In no department is Germany more advanced than in stage direction. Leopold Jessner in Berlin has placed the Stadt Theatre among the foremost the-

atres of Europe. While he favors the classics his mind is always open to the novel, the experimental, the expressionistic. He made an enormous success with a new strange comedy by Hasenclever in the winter of 1927.

The wizardry of Max Reinhardt, without a peer in the theatre of today, the technique of Karl Heinz Martin who works with planes and staircases as in the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow, the charm of Herr Stahl in the Munich Stadt Theatre, the art of Dr. Bülow in the Freie-Bühne of Berlin would be unique anywhere.

Germany delves into the past and gazes into the future. At the Salzberg Festival every summer Max Reinhardt touches the classics with a knowing and a beautiful finger in the pathos of "Jedermann." Against the memorable background of the old Dom Kirche "Everyman" lives again in moving drama. Great actors give us Schiller's undying "Kabale und Leibe." There is a new and daring "Midsummer Night's Dream." Bruno Walter revives Mozart in "Figaro" and "Fidelio." And in Berlin on revolving stages we have "The Miracle" or new modern plays portraying the strange, weird scenic sets of grotesque expressionistic art, and the most unusual effects in color, designing, and lighting that one can see anywhere.

Ernest Schwabe has perfected a lighting system which could have been developed only by the patience of a German. Early dawn, high noon, twilight, sunset, midnight, darkness, all the atmospheric changes of a perfect day. He sweeps a desert for us with the yellow sickly light of a simoon. He traces storm clouds on land and sea. And across the faces of his actors he spreads a radium grease paint so that they shine out uncannily in the darkness.

Acting in Germany is uniformly good. Out of the general run have sprung Emil Jannings, Werner Krauss, Wladimir Sokoloff, Elizabeth Bergner, Helene, Hans and Herman Thimig, and Alexander Moissi, greatest of all. Lilli Darvas and a host of earnest young actors cluster around Reinhardt in Salzburg and Berlin.

The theatres are large and beautiful, spacious and magnificently designed. Cities large and small have their handsome Stadt Theatres; and Berlin has a score of Freie Bühne's, Volk Vereins, Comoedias, Kammer Haüser, a magnificent opera house, and innumerable small theatres in constant use.

Audiences in Germany are appreciative and attentive. Plays begin early, have long intermissions, and after the audiences have satisfied the "inner man" during the intervals their attention is unfaltering. German audiences are interested in author,

actor, and director; while the theme of the play becomes a subject for earnest discussion.

Theatre-going in Germany is still expensive and the privilege of the upper classes. If the masses want to see a play they seldom dine, but stand for hours outside the theatre in patient crowds munching "Brot und Käse" while they wait for cheap seats.

German films are among the best in the world. It is here that Ufa reigns, that Emil Jannings and Lya du Putti first saw the light of day. Magnificent cinemas line the avenues; and the "Gloria-Palast," "Ufa," and the "Capital" are among the handsomest in the world.

Yet it is in the newer Expressionism that Germany and her sister, Austria, capture our interest. Here there are no rules, no boundaries. Man knows the mud, but stares up at the stars. Man knows that the rules of yesterday will not fit the needs of today, that out of the chaos and the babble, out of the jargon and the mêlée will be born a new drama, with new scenes and moods.

Dramatists dream of new dramatic unities, of new methods by which they can express the aching soul of man. That soul which in all its new-found torment needs have a new expression. That soul, burnt and torn and twisted, has come stealing down crooked area-ways trying to express its innermost travail.

XII: FRANCE – THE SUBTLE

The color, the sparkle, the insouciance of the French people are expressed at intervals in their dramas. Ordinarily the Boulevard dramatist invites us to believe that France is Sex. In no single section of the world is the illegitimate "triangle" more dramatized, poetized, glorified.

Yet the true drama of France is no more the Boulevard play than the true drama of America is embedded in "Abie's Irish Rose" or in "The Follies." And the dramatists who have from the days of Sardou and Molière filled the "Comédie Française" and the better Parisian theatres ask us to pause before we completely condemn French drama.

Let us realize for a moment the long enduring isolation of France. As a nation the French people speak less of other tongues than any other nation in the world. Since the days of Napoleon, when French art, drama, and literature mounted steadily upward and affirmed their independence, until the Great War, French drama has remained superbly isolated. And convictions of one's own superlative importance are perhaps the last qualities in the world to prove a spur to dramatic growth.

French dramatists understand their people—their peculiar Gallic psychology with its froth and spume, its tantalizing sparkle, its "joie de vivre." These authors understand also that the sparkle and froth are no indication of the sane, conservative philosophy underneath. They perceive that constant French "explosions" are mere cloaks for a substratum of frugality, that the Frenchman never forgets the sanctity of his home, his franc, and his "affaires"; they perceive that while he may appear to dally endlessly at tantalizing cafés under piquant, red-striped awnings, he has, however, left his business in good shape before coming to the café, and that over that café table he may transact more important business.

The curious French people are almost all dramatic in every action and every relationship. They dramatize life. The garçon in the restaurant serves us with theatric art and gauges us secretly, perhaps estimating us for the size of our "pourboire," perhaps merely wondering whether we are a serious "Anglais" or an excitable "Americain." The vendeuse in the shop is dramatically interested in us, whether she sells us a bit of lace for five francs or a costume for five hundred. She is interested in us as part of life—a strange foreign part; and her shining eyes and swift-moving fingers tell us that she is a potential actress waiting for some thoughtful régisseur.

So this interesting, graceful, and dramatic people compose an audience and a personnel of artists difficult to match anywhere. In the heart of the little shop-girl from the "Gallerie Lafayette," who has had only "vin rouge" and "un peu du pain" before she climbed to the top gallery of the "Comédie Française," there is a great burning sympathy with the turmoil or the pathos of the play far below.

Climb with her to that top gallery. Sit silently as she sobs or laughs or trembles. Watch her every movement while she and her "petit ami" discuss every situation of the drama. See how she, too, lives the play, as much as the dramatist who wrote it, or the actress who interprets it. Watch her as she leans with tightly clenched fingers far over the rail, following the movements of the actors. See that, she, too, a mute actress, is but part of the great, vivid, acting French audience.

Drama is very vital in France. Perhaps because, being true to themselves, the French people always want to get their "franc's" worth, and, having paid to be thrilled and startled, exalted or depressed, they will not come again unless they have purchased these sensations. No other people in the world could crowd "The Grand Guignol" night after night, and sit delighted while the most gruesome spectacles are presented to them lavishly.

The French audience is a great and important part of the French theatre. And because the Frenchman does not travel much outside of his own country new movements from other theatres have crept in slowly. There are fewer translations of foreign plays in France than in any other country in Europe. Bernard Shaw has been known in Paris but scantily with "St. Joan." Only a few of his plays have been done by the ambitious Gémier at "The Odeon" or by the Pitoeffs or the English players at the "Théatre Anglais." Eugene O'Neill has seen the light of day only with "The Emperor Jones" and "The Hairy Ape," while "The Great God Brown" has not been done at all. And, with the exception of Jacques Copeau who has produced some of Reinhardt's successes at the "Vieux Colombier," German drama is practically non-existent in Paris. France with her exquisite language, her comprehension of her own needs, her complete mastery of the art of costuming and stage settings, with her own methods in acting, is slow in adopting the newer Expressionism of Germany, Austria, Russia, or the drastic social problem plays of England and America.

Yet in the past year there has been a slight but definitely perceptible movement towards a certain newness of form. Gaston Baty and Louis Jouvet at the "Comédie-des-Champs-Elysées" have done

THÉATRE NATIONAL
DE
L'ODÉON
Second Théâtre Français

DIRECTION

Téléphone
FLEURUS 08-31

Paris, le 15 novembre 1925

Chère Madame

Comme vous êtes aimable et délicate. Je vous remercie bien chaleureusement de vos bonnes pensées. Je veux bien accepter le rideau de scène que vous m'offrez avec tant de bonne grâce. Mais, entre vous et moi, chère Madame, les preuves matérielles ne sont pas nécessaires à prouver l'amitié qui nous lie désormais. Si j'accepte c'est parce que je me servirai de votre rideau avec la pensée qu'ainsi vous serez

ma collaboratrice lorsque je monterai une pièce avec ce beau rideau que vous voulez bien m'envoyer à l'Odéon.

Je ne sais encore à quelle date j'irai à New York. Je serai fixé en février seulement, par M. Miner de Stony-Point. Vous le connaissez certainement.

Je suis très occupé par ma Société universelle du Théâtre. Je vais à Londres le 6 Xbre, le 13 à Vienne, puis à Budapest puis à Prague, Varsovie etc. Je vous enverrai prochainement le projet de cette Société universelle du Théâtre.

Merci, chère Madame, de toutes vos gentillesses et croyez à mes amitiés dévouées.

F. Jémier

something new in their formless "Maya" the pageant-like vision of a prostitute's life. "Life is done as a series of pictures," Simon Gautillon writes. " 'Maya' is merely a series of episodes which seem ended only to begin again." His prostitute is a sweet and generous soul giving herself generously to the men who come to stay with her. As a butterfly reflects itself in a mirror and takes on the color of the lives that fly about her, so Maya, the human butterfly, gives these men of her color and her beauty in the brief moment they remain in her room. The air is charged with "Sex," but also with the generosity of giving. And in the tawdry room which Maya occupies one senses a great pity—that none of these men has freed the soul of the tainted woman and given it peace. The bruised butterfly flies on giving and giving. At the end we know that she will always fly on, beginning again where she has always stopped, until, like life itself, she falls, spent and broken.

Simon Gantillon comes nearer to the technique of Francis Langer in "Periphery" and Hasenclever in "Beyond" than any other dramatist in France. And Louis Jouvet, Lügne Poe at the "Maison L'Œuvre," Gémier with his "Theatre Internationale," and Jacques Copeau experimenting in the country-side with his young actors from the old "Vieux-Colom-

bier," have definitely heard the clarion of the new order.

H. R. Lenormand perhaps most of all has ventured daringly into the inner life of man. For years a student of the subconscious, he has shown first in "Les Rates" the outer, visible progress of poor struggling human beings who are always just "Might-Have-Beens." The minds of these failures go far on, in advance, not only of their bodies, but of the tangible atmosphere which surround their lives. We see them struggling—poor "middle-minds"—unable to fulfil their dreams. Lenormand is an expert technician of atmosphere, whether it be in the hectic desert of "Le Simoun," in the dark half-formed shapes of Arab lives, in the curious, pathetic back-stage scenes of a provincial theatre in "Les Rates," or as in "Man and his Ghosts," when we see the spectral antechambers of an aging Don Juan's memories.

Lenormand can create these atmospheres uncannily; partly because of his superb mastery of the French language, and partly because of his long study of the subconscious. A mystic penetration his, into dim mental processes—a comprehension which perhaps became increasingly intimate because of the spiritual sorrow of one whom he dearly loved.

The plays of Lenormand have been accorded ex-

cellent productions by Fermin Gémier at "The Odeon." Gémier has taken today one of the most important steps in the dramatic life of Europe. He has organized an "International Theatre Society" with headquarters in Paris and auxiliary branches in many countries of the world. For the past two seasons he has had a Festival during the spring season in Paris, where nine nations have presented their individual dramas in their native manner, with their own directors and actors. Next season he hopes to have at least fifteen countries represented. The International Society is a Union of producers, actors, dramatists, scenic artists, electricians, dancers, critics —in short, of every art allied with the theatre.

Gémier, for many years the distinguished director of the "National Odeon" and the "National People's Theatre" in Paris, conceived the stupendous idea of a Universal Theatre Association in the first years after the War. Realizing that human beings can be most closely allied in their cultural pursuits, that Art admits of no national boundaries or prejudices, that Shakespeare and Beethoven are universal, and that Molière can be loved as much in America as in France, he conceived the idea of a union of all dramatic interests. Workers in the same métier are spiritual as well as professional colleagues, and the language of the emotions is universal. So Gémier

has made the great dramatic gesture toward Peace, the artistic move to end the thought of War. By a common love for a common Art men lose their individual pettiness, their universal hatreds.

For the International Festival in 1927 Gémier sponsored unique productions from other lands. Japan brought her "*Nō*" plays, Italy her Pirandello productions, England her "Saint Joan" and "The Might-Have-Beens." Three large theatres housed a variety of these plays in Paris, and the keen interest of a multicolored audience caused a tremendous réclame.

Gémier has already interested brilliant artists, authors, and actors in France and other countries. Romain Rolland, so lately turning to the dramatization of the French Revolution in "The Game of Love and Death," has become the voluntary head of a Committee on Folk Plays and Festivals. Rolland believes in the power of the common people in the theatre.

The force of the great common mind is an enduring dramatic democracy. Rolland goes to the secret sources of man's actions to formulate his decisions and believes that the International Theatre Society is a mighty factor for lasting peace.

Gémier has interested artists and artisans of many theatres, among them: Jean de Ferauly, lead-

ing actor of the Comédie Française; Louis Jouvet, Director, and Gaston Baty, producer, at the "Champs Elysées"; Tristan and Lucian Besnard, dramatic critics; Charpentier, the leading French musical composer; Alfred Kerr, critic from Germany; Courcelines from France; Sybil Thorndike, Lewis Casson and "The Venturers" from London; Pirandello, Max Reinhardt, Karl Heinz Martin, and Benavente. His aim is the humanity of the mind, the inter-allied chain of human sympathies. He sees in the dramatic world a link which unites the consciousness of all men.

Gémier's step, let us hope, is but the beginning of a movement which will stabilize a universal interest and understanding of the value of the theatre in life. It demonstrates the mental youth of the great director, and is a sure prophecy of the progress of dramatic France. It shows a desire to end all hatreds, and is an epochal symbol of the future of the French theatre. Gémier is a soldier in the cause of Universal Peace.

Among the younger dramatists Edouard Bourdet, author of "The Rubicon" and "La Prisonnière"—which, under the name of "The Captive" startled America last season—deserves thoughtful attention. Bourdet, pondering for several years over a situation which, in France at least, has become increasingly

grave, produced "La Prisonnière." It had an enormous success in Paris. The play is being produced at present in three or four European countries, and will be presented soon in London.

Only New York, in a burst of censorious fury, closed "The Captive," classing it with other spurious sex plays, and thus condemning one of the most important contributions to dramatic literature in several decades.

Thoughtful critics, and at least one great physician, have declared that "The Captive" will one day rank with Ibsen's "Ghosts" and Brieux's "Damaged Goods."

Conversing with Edouard Bourdet one senses the spirit of a new France. Facing moral and social conditions as the French are, this young author insists that the theatre can and should be a place for serious themes, for sermons so carefully dramatized that we thrill at the drama and forget the sermon.

And because he is a master of his medium, conscious of the demands of the theatre and possessed of a brilliant stage technique, because of his accurate knowledge of his people, we are likely to have much that is valuable from his pen.

No survey of the French theatre could be complete without envisioning French acting. Inspirational, intense, artistic, stimulated by a naïve sense of drama,

the French players move and talk and act like life itself. They are involved in their interpretations, they are in love with trying to interest us in the portrayal of their characters. And, since the days of Antoine and his "Théâtre Libre," they are tremendously natural and *en rapport* with life. They pray and sing, live and love, they are plunged into the depth of sadness or exalted to the heights of passion, and are realistically imbued with a tremendous verve and furore. Anglo-Saxon as we are, sitting cool and critical in orchestra, balcony, or loge, we know that before the evening is over we shall marvel at their endless passion and be amazed that they are not actually consumed by their own fury. "Camille D'Arville" comes to us with the realistic thrill of many memories. The epics of Racine, the comedies of Molière, the intricacies of Sardou fascinate us endlessly in the dark corners of the great "Comédie Française."

French stage direction has improved immeasurably since the War. Today no money is spared on costuming or production. Among the most brilliant of stage directors in Paris are Georges Pitoeff and Sacha Guitry. The former with his wife Ludmilla, whether she fascinates as a spiritual "St. Joan" or as an ingenuous "Mademoiselle Bourrat," have taken Paris by both slender hands and gripped it firmly.

A splendid combination—Georges and Ludmilla. Georges directs, manages, acts. Although his acting is far inferior to that of Ludmilla's, he has directed some of the most interesting productions in Paris. Lenormand gives his plays to Pitoeff for production, and has for many years written for Mme. Pitoeff directly. It was she who first brought "Les Rates" to fame, as well as "Le Lache," "L'Amour Magicien" and "Le Temps Est un Songe." A happy combination are these three sensitive artists. Lenormand spends much of his time at Pitoeff's home in the South of France discussing his plays with his wife and Pitoeff during formative stages of composition.

Georges Pitoeff is a Russian modernist—suggestive, economical, sparse. His production of "St. Joan" seemed the most appropriate to the era of the French court of Charles I. His surroundings for the ecstatic "Maid" seemed the most fitting for a Saint, the richness of whose spirit needed no velvet robes. A survey of the Theatre Guild's "St. Joan" in New York with Miss Lenihan—a production whose splendor matched that of Lewis Casson's and Sybil Thorndike's in London, and of Max Reinhardt's and Elizabeth Bergner's in Berlin—such a survey leaves the Pitoeffs absolutely in command of the field. Added to the beauty of the French language, the movements of peasants, of the French soldiers, the scant sug-

gestiveness of the French court, gave us many reasons for preferring the French "Joan."

The methods of Pitoeff are an exact antithesis to those of Sacha Guitry. Sacha and Yvonne Printemps, gifted husband and wife, are another couple who keep alive the tradition of family life in the French Theatre. Sacha is the son of the renowned Lucien Guitry who, though a great actor, was a less gifted Stage Director. Sacha, the inheritor of the theatric Guitry mantle, has perhaps more successful plays to his credit than any other producer in France. As author he has written over half a hundred plays, as actor he has appeared in many more, and as producer he is constantly at work on his own and other people's plays. One of his outstanding successes was "Mozart"—a brilliant vehicle for the grace and voice of his chère Yvonne. Sacha frames his productions in all the tangible technique of Scribe and Sardou. He seeks no innovations in the theatre. He is content with the "real." That "real" he makes so beautiful that we forget at times his lack of originality in stage direction. He knows his cultured Boulevard audience and he serves them with a menu constantly suited to their taste. Lavish in productions, expert in acting and directing, he is comparable to our own Belasco. And, as is true of Belasco, the dazzling splendor of his productions fades under the calm

criticism one is likely to give them the morning after. We find it difficult to realize that, with all his prodigality, Guitry has added little to the actual progress of the drama in France. Rather he is the glorified apostle of the commonplace—a director who does not amaze nor invoke inspiration, a man, who, with all the wealth of resources at his command, has done less to stimulate new thought in drama than the brusk Lügne-Poe or the sparse Pitoeff.

Lügne-Poe at the tiny "Theatre L'Oeuvre" or the "Maison L'Oeuvre," as he prefers to call it, has his own workshop for new French plays. His delight is to discover unknown authors and actors. Most of his productions are from the pens of absolutely new dramatists. With the same working principles as the "Provincetown Playhouse" and the "Laboratory Theatre" in New York or the "Everyman" in London, Lügne-Poe aims to discover new talent. In many instances his daring efforts achieve permanent fame, and are moved to larger theatres. It was so with "The Captive." It will undoubtedly be so with "La Bourgeoisie," a finely acted tragedy of the War. With a theme similar to Ernst Toller's "Henkemann" Lügne-Poe has exploited the tragedy of a returning soldier's impotence. During her young husband's absence at the front, the wife, lovely and lonely, has sought the company of other men—

at first, as a matter of amusement; later, because she has fallen a prey to her own passions. Her husband, returning at the time when she needed him most, is a mutilated victim of the War who must jealously guard his health. Thus, the woman's tragic doom is sealed. She goes back to her life of depravity while still struggling to keep her home and children immune. The effort is too terrible and she ends in suicide.

A stark drama. A tragedy which palliates nothing, conceals nothing. An author staring at life as it is. Too young to gloss over its hideous fatality with apologies, too dramatic to attempt to hide the truth, so Lügne-Poe and his young collaborators speed the drama forward in France. Simplicity marks their productions, all the emphasis being placed on the subject matter and none on adornment. This author-producer is of the school of Tchekov and Gorky, O'Neill and Hasenclever, of Ernst Toller and of Franz Werfel. He, too, is moved by the tragic aftermath of the War—the Great Disillusion which has found its reflection in the strongest dramas of today.

In the art of costuming France is superb. Yet in lighting French directors can learn much from Germany and Russia. In the glittering glories of musical comedies, such as "Venise," the "Follies," and

"The Casino-de-Paris" in the beauties of revues, of operas, of "Opéra Comique," France is without a peer.

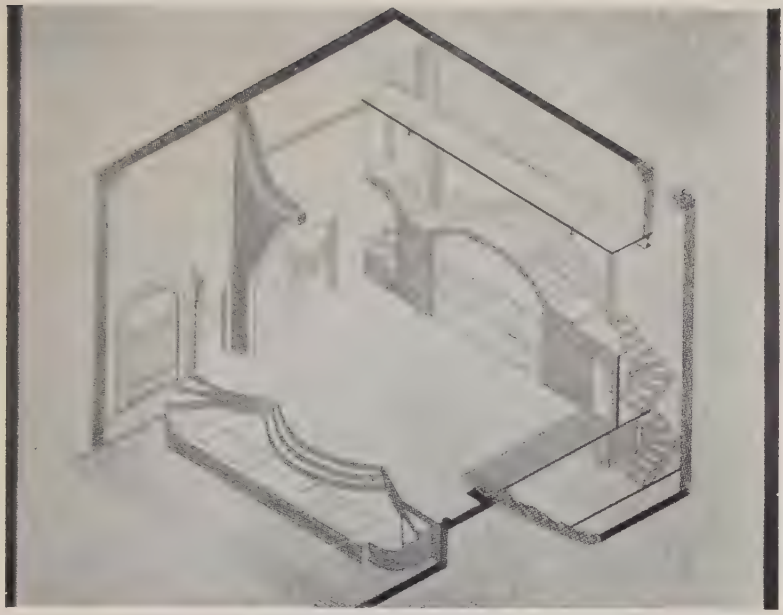
The theatres of Paris as well as some in the smaller cities, like Marseilles, Deauville, Trouville, are comfortable and modern. One receives every attention. There are drinks, refreshments, and spacious cloak-rooms. Yet one dare not venture in without the inevitable "pourboire"; for tipping is the passport to one's seat (already paid for), or one's program.

French drama on the whole is vital and healthy. It is just beginning to invite new influences. After its long isolation it is now trying to gain contacts with the theatres of other lands.

The quality of the nation, its independence of thought, is evident in its plays. Although Ibsen, Shaw, O'Neill were slow of recognition in France, they are now part of some French répertoires.

Like a highly polished mirror French dramatists have always reproduced their own people.

Great invention is not always born of contacts with foreign minds. The fertility of creation may develop on a desert isle. Too much association with the literature of many nations may develop a polyglot product born of imitation and not of independent thinking.



THÉÂTRE DE VIEUX COLOMBIER

"MAYA" BY SIMON GANTILLON

"THE GOOD HOPE" BY HEYERMANS

In its isolation France bore and reared her Racine, Molière, Scribe, Sardou, Voltaire, Balzac, De Maupassant, Lenormand, Bourdet, Anatole France, Antoine, and her Gémier.

The most perfect product is not always born of intermarriage. The most vital and important literary products may be fertilized without too much pollen from the theatres of other lands.

So let us not deplore the individuality, the intuition, and the personality that is France.

XIII: HOLLAND AND BELGIUM – THE STATIC

So few of us consider the Netherlands as being on the dramatic map. Yet the "Odeon" at The Hague and the "Theatre Flamande" at Brussels have housed plays of strange quality. Jan Fabricius, in a quiet suburb of The Hague, does work similar to Ibsen; and Herman Teirlinck in Brussels creates plays of weird imagery.

There are qualities in the Dutch writers comparable to those of the giants of Norway. Louis Couperus resembles Selma Lagerlöf—yet his novels are more pregnant with poetry and his "Old People and the Things that Pass" could scarcely have sprung from any other than Dutch soil. It remains in the memory, blazing and beautiful.

The theatres of these little countries are solidly constructed and handsome. Brussels, a miniature Paris, has several fine playhouses and many music halls which house the latest Variétés.

Holland is more moderate, modest in its expenditure on places of amusement, yet sane and comfortable. The "Odeon" at The Hague suffices for every need.

In these theatres one is invited to spend a few

hours at great ease. A long rail, running before the seats, forms a reading desk lighted by good lamps. At these desks one can read the program or a book in the intervals. Wide promenoirs at the sides and back of the theatres are fitted up with attractive little tables at which one can dine or drink.

Lighting, staging, orchestration—all are good. In the case of Herman Teirlinck at Brussels in the "Theatre Flamande" lighting has reached an extraordinary degree of beauty.

The audiences in these theatres are well-mannered, as is the public in general. People live quietly in Holland. There is little of the passion of Paris, the volubility of Italy, or the noise of the United States.

The Dutch file into the theatres quietly. The people of the Netherlands are silent; rarely do they display emotion. At intervals one hears applause; but the scene must be extraordinarily moving or beautiful.

Actors and audience reflect the psychology of the people. In Holland, especially, more than elsewhere, plays seem to be torn from the pages of everyday life. Jan Fabricius writes with a pen that resembles the brush of Josef Israels.

Fabricius is a dramatist little known outside of his native Netherlands. Max Reinhardt has produced

"Unter Ein Dach" in Berlin, and Teirlinck has brought some of his plays to Brussels. His beautiful native Javanese dramas have been produced in the Dutch Indies and Holland; but the occidental world knows little of these or of his Dutch plays. Jan Fabricius is the Ibsen of his beloved Holland. His play "Under One Roof" is classic in construction, and, like Ibsen's "Brand," is part of the life of the community he knows so well.

Fabricius writes with simple and beautiful diction. We see the exact reproduction of Dutch home life—interiors seemingly transferred upon the stage, not so much by the aid of the scenic artist as that they seem to be brought directly from the little Dutch home to the big Dutch stage. Fabricius' characters and settings have intense reality. This is perhaps the matrix of Dutch art—the art that seems to be essentially artless.

"Unter Ein Dach" ("Under One Roof") is the story of an old unwanted grandfather. The play opens with a return from a funeral. The aged protagonist who has just buried his wife, his companion for half a century, finds himself being passed on from one child to another. Each finds a good excuse for not taking him. Only the despised little daughter-in-law, whose past smacks of the "streets," has a loving welcome for the old grandfather.

Yet this daughter-in-law has been rejected by all —by the old man himself who is shown to us built not of heroic stature, but dwarfed by many failings and suspicions, not the least of which have been directed against the poor girl. There are tense, dramatic scenes between these two, also between the young husband who has loved and defended her, and the wicked step-sisters who, as in "Cinderella," make her life a torment.

The power of Fabricius is not in his story so much as in the humanity of his characters and in the swift realism of his action. People speak with the utmost simplicity. Drama seems to come from the mainsprings of life—the drama which springs from selfish desires. The drama of characterization is as plain as the old father's hob-nailed shoes or the tracery of "Cinderella's" pathetic little lace collar.

Fabricius is a master of atmosphere and of dialogue. As in Hauptman and Ibsen, speech comes as it should always come—broken and abortive at times; at others clear and swift-moving, animated with deep-rooted passion.

And the rooms in which these people move seem real. The air is charged with the atmosphere of their lives. We feel that they have always lived there. Their breath lingers.

Fabricius has written a different page in his plays

of Javanese life. For many years he was Consul to Dutch Java. He has written Javanese tales of rare beauty. One in particular, "Iliana," shines like a dark emerald. The tragic story of a Javanese girl married to an Englishman who, when his child is born, determines that it shall be reared and educated in England. Failing to count on mother love, he arranges to take his baby alone with him to England. On the night of the proposed abduction the crazed mother kills her baby and herself.

This play is a poem of beauty—surprisingly rare from the pen of the sturdy Fabricius. He has written many other dramas of Javanese life.

From Amsterdam and The Hague come the plays of Herman Heyermans. "Links," perhaps the greatest of them all, has been produced throughout Europe, but not yet in America. Heyermans has a sturdy technique. His characters are clear-cut and swift-moving, and his dramas are built upon plots carefully conceived and executed. There is, perhaps, a greater theatrical quality about Heyermans than in Fabricius; certainly a more sophisticated sense of drama. Yet for the mirroring of a people, an intuitive understanding of the Dutch psychology, Fabricius is without peer.

In Belgium a rare artist has developed modestly and without universal réclame. At the Paris Expo-

sition, at the Open Air Theatre at Leyden, and at the "Theatre Flamande" at Brussels, Herman Teirlinck has been acclaimed.

Beginning life as a cabinet-maker, continuing in the furniture business, running a theatre, fathering a substantial family, Teirlinck has had scant leisure to write plays.

Yet "Le Film Ralenti" ("The Film Retarded") and "The Man Without a Body" are works of unusual quality. Teirlinck has also composed a poetic drama of the Magdalene called "I Serve."

"The Film Retarded" is a play of unusual imagery. A man and woman and their baby, finding themselves outside the law and unaccepted anywhere, resolve to die. We see them on the parapet above the Seine. People of the streets pass by and jeer—a soldier, a wanton, a policeman, the riff-raff, the dregs. The outcasts have no place in the city. They plunge into the Seine.

The play concerns itself with the unrolling of the film of their lives. As they hang suspended, caught in the side of the deep river, they see the scenes of childhood, boyhood, of young married life. The play passes before their eyes as they are drowning, in the course of a few seconds, and is played to bursts of great music. The Three Wise Men, the "Magi,"

come into the scenes, and always there is the roll of the river, and the swift movement of past lives.

With superb lighting, with a dexterous use of drapes, light and shadows, we see the film of two lives. Teirlinck directs every incident and arrangement of this brilliant drama with consummate skill.

There are translations of foreign plays, especially French and German, in the theatres of Belgium. Latterly there has been a movement toward Shaw and O'Neill.

Acting is dignified in the Netherlands, and reliable, if not inspired. There is little of the passion of the French, the integrity of the German, the finesse of the English; but there is a native dignity and charm.

On the dramatic map little Belgium and Holland may some day loom large. Out of the shadows have crept two men of genius. Great art often develops in obscurity, in the unblazoned life of a thoughtful silent people.

In no country today has a man created a drama greater than "Le Film Ralenti." Daring and unusual, born of a new form, asking no permission from the old, making no apologies to the new, Teirlinck has gazed into the ether and torn from a nebulous beyond a method exquisite and as yet unmatched.

XIV: SWITZERLAND—THE BOURGEOISE

Strangely enough, the neutral tone of Switzerland seems to lend its color to the theatre. The calm little country among the mountains, so persistent in its determination not to become involved in friction of any kind, has achieved a form of passivity in art, which closely approaches lifelessness. Living as they do on the highroad between Italy and France, Germany and Spain, the Swiss people seem to have retained enough individuality to have given us something personal and characteristic in the theatre. But this has not been the case. Switzerland relies mostly upon foreign touring companies to bring successful plays from other climes to their principal cities; and seems willing to bask unemotionally in the light of the dramatic achievements of other lands.

There is an exception, however, in the case of the Swiss Folk Plays, or Bauer Festivals—a form of drama which is composed by peasants, acted, staged, and produced by them, with excellent verisimilitude to their own lives.

The plays are simple affairs, derived from an incident in some pastoral folk-tale and intimately connected with their lives. The acting is excellent, the

humor fresh and buoyant, and staging and scenic setting are excellent replicas of Switzerland's own great natural scenic sets.

These pastoral plays or "Bauern-Fest Spiele" travel from place to place, mostly in the smaller cities and villages, where they are eagerly welcomed. Good music is an inevitable accompaniment of these folk-plays, and the life of the people on the stage seems to mirror that of the audience.

Music and impromptu pageants with colorful tableaux are a vivid part of Swiss village life. Long summer evenings are enlivened with gay *bands:* maidens in lovely Tyrolean costumes whose desire for pageantry bursts forth on every village green. Switzerland seems strangely primitive in contrast to other lands, yet with a certain rural beauty in these simple productions which matches the exalted beauty of its divine background. Being the "world's playground" has not, however, served Switzerland to stimulate its dramatists into producing a native drama which might well raise their country's status on the world's dramatic platform.

XV: ENGLAND – THE CONSERVATIVE

The theatre of modern England resembles nothing so much as a cross-word puzzle in which we search befuddled among a lot of meaningless plays until suddenly we strike a work that makes the quest worth while. The plays of the West-End theatres are ordinarily as commonplace and saccharine as the multitude of London's sweet-shops. But the occasional drama by Galsworthy, Miles Malleson, or Shaw are sufficient to repay an endless endurance of mediocrity.

Such rare plays as "The Fanatics" by Miles Malleson, "The Conquering Hero" by Alan Monkhouse, "The House," by H. F. Rubenstein, "Rumor," by J. K. Munro, and the enduring "Tragedy of Nan," by John Masefield prove that all art is not yet dead in the British Isles.

England's drama is an expression of English personality. The Englishman resents nothing so much as talking about himself or indulging in self-analysis or introspection of any sort. Freud could never have prospered in England nor Schopenhauer, and the disciples of Nietzsche are more numerous in almost any other corner of the world. An Eng-

lishman never wants to talk about the things that interest him most. From boyhood he is authoritatively informed that only a bounder talks about himself.

So in England there is an almost complete dearth of discussion concerning strivings, dreams, ideals. England is a land of inhibitions. Over the high wall of English reticence only J. M. Barrie can penetrate with any degree of certainty.

Englishwomen do not discuss their "conquests" nor Englishmen their love affairs. If you ask a young Englishman what sort of "ideal" he cherishes he will probably tell you, "Oh, some one who is top-hole!"

All of which is bad for drama. The theatre demands an uncovering of reticences. It demands the revelation of hidden motives, longings, and passions. It demands the strong mergings and the conflicts of human wills and desires.

The Englishman is brave, kind, and courteous. He is honest, often brutally so; and in latter-day post-war England he has discarded conventions until we find him taking life "on his own" as he finds it. But his reserve in telling what he really thinks, his shyness in talking about his sorrows, is not conducive to the making of drama. The theatre thrives on volubility, on an avowal of inner emotions, on

the discussion of all the secret turmoils which make up the course of life. Inhibitions are bad for the theatre. They impede its natural progress. It requires the wizardry of Barrie, the caustic penetration of Shaw, the photogravures of Galsworthy, to probe into the crevices of Englishmen's minds and to analyze them before the world.

The more recent years have brought about a decline in conventions. Men and women are no longer satisfied in England to abide unquestioningly by the traditions of their ancestors. Peerages bought with wealth derived from soap factories or newspapers have caused an abatement in yesterday's reverence for titles. With the breaking away from form in everyday life there has come a corresponding desire to frame a new moral code, to give new occupations to women, to evince impatience with accepted methods.

It is this change which has served as an incentive to drama. New life begins to flow into the theatre. When John Galsworthy indicts the legal system of England in "Justice," by declaring that justice goes to him who can afford to pay for it, when Granville Barker in "Waste" shows us the appalling loss of a good man because of unjust conditions, when Alan Monkhouse dares to make "A Conquering Hero" out of what we dubbed a "slacker" in the War by

causing his "Conscientious Objector" to show us how right he was in objecting, we begin to see the light of a new day in English drama.

With each questioning of the status quo, with every probing into the sluggish arteries of accepted traditions, with every blow at hoary customs, the playwright intensifies his drama.

England still likes her drama tangible and clear! She will not tolerate impressionism even in Sunday Night Stage Societies, which are the nearest approach to the experimental theatre. Yet, notwithstanding her coldness to the expressionism of the Continent there are a few thoughtful dramatists definitely inaugurating a new era in the English theatre.

The new era voices itself in clear and tangible plays. Franz Werfel, Georg Kaiser, Ernst Toller, the super-dramatists of Germany and Austria are not popular in England. There is an impatience with symbolism, a silent anger at introspection à la Schnitzler. England wants to know what she is about. If a man intends to ruminate about his soul, or to express in himself some "Mass" fact or "Mob" psychology, he must do it in terms of one plus one makes two.

As in other countries, so in England one must take account of national psychology to understand na-

tional drama. In the English theatre perhaps more than in any other country in the world the play is expressed in terms of the people. The method of production, staging, acting, the behavior of audiences—all are reserved and inhibited, often concerned more with an outward repression of intense emotion than with its expression. Passionate outbursts are scorned. Actors are adored who, like Gerald du Maurier, seem to conceal all emotion. English dramatists avoid strong climaxes and "end-of-the-play" surprises. English directors insist upon reticence, and English audiences, with the occasional exception of the "booing" gallery god, carry good-breeding to an extreme of icy silence. Applause is little shown, and in the intermission, after a tragic third act, one is apt to hear, "Pretty fair—that," which is lavish praise.

English drama has numbered some of the greatest cynics of the age on its roster. George Bernard Shaw, a dynamic pragmatist with a pen like a rapier, has made thrusts at society until "Mrs. Warren's Profession" has been brought to the light of day, until "Widower's Houses" have moldered in their own offal, and "John Bull's Other Island" has become a fairer place to live in. So much has the talent of Shaw been written about that one writes a trite page if one attempts to add to the plaudits. Yet to-

day we know that he is dating rapidly because he has based his themes on the outrages of society, outrages which are being corrected by society itself, instead of delving into the unchanging weaknesses of human nature. So often are Shaw's characters but mouthpieces voicing his schemes for better living, so often has he forgotten the "divine efflatus" which makes the humanness of man immortal, that his works are doomed to pay with a swift mortality. Shakespeare dealing with the eternal verities in the heart and mind of man will not crumble while humanity endures. But the philosopher of Adelphi Terrace has chosen to preach rather than to understand.

No place but England could have produced Shaw, despite his boasts (rightfully) of being an Irishman, and the influence upon him of German "Kultur." How symbolic he is of England with his "theses" and his "isms," his intellectual romancing, his horror of the swift-moving and ingenuous expressions of the human heart! Only in "Candida" do we feel the generous maternity of woman. Only in "Saint Joan" do we hear the rustlings of spiritual intimations. Only in "A Man of Destiny" do we understand the humanity of Napoleon. Yet Shaw has indelibly inscribed himself on the world's dramatic ledger. In Germany and America he is perhaps more popular and admired than in England. One

can remain in London months on end without seeing a play of Shaw. He has but recently refused to have "The Devil's Disciple" performed in the West End because he did not want the actors to suffer from half-empty houses.

Galsworthy, like Shaw, could only have been an English product. There are many mute, undramatic Galsworthys extant in England. His sentiments voice the daily lives of Englishmen. His sense of "fair play," his ability to see "both sides" of the question, his tremendous restraint when in deepest passion—all are typical of "West End London." Galsworthy's "Patrician"—a notable symbol of a fast-dying order—is the contribution of a typical Englishman to the literature of his day. Only one who has lived in the Forsyte tradition could write the "Forsyte Saga."

Yet Galsworthy knows his "sweated workers," his "under-dog." He has hobnobbed with green-grocer and navvy. He has smelled the new turned turf with the field laborer and taken tea with his employer under the gables of an old manse. He has drunk deep of the new spring larkspur with a deep-loving English farmer as well as sat in the dining room of the squire. Galsworthy holds aloft the scales of justice, picturing the loyalties of many men, trying to understand the motives of all. Perhaps

his greatest fault is that he is almost uncannily unhuman in his too great tolerance.

We want a dramatist to "take sides." We want him to tell us WHO he thinks is right. We often want him to make our decisions for us. Too often, as in "The Skin Game," Galsworthy leaves us with a sense of rancor. We are angered that nobody is totally black, that there are so many gray or half-and-half people. "Old English" is an arrant rogue, yet he is lovable and captivates our affections. Captain Dancy of "Loyalties," brave and daring in the War, in love with his wife yet not true to her, loyal to his "code" yet a thief. While constantly within us a slow rage accumulates because nobody is wholly "good" or "bad." It does not satisfy us that this is life. So many of us still want our villains and our heroes, the good old fine, heroic people who stimulate us to long for greatness.

Galsworthy is preeminently English in that he loathes loud drama. He will go to any lengths to avoid a big scene before a final curtain. He dallies among half-shades and toys with the tensity of emotions shamefacedly rather than open the sluices and let the torrents pour through.

Yet Galsworthy knows his theatre perhaps better than Shaw. His people are human, and, while never heroic, pulsate with actual existence. Galsworthy

Dear Miss Kraft

I shall be happy to see you in June when you come over; but I am afraid there is not much likelihood of a new play. I have dramatized "The First & The Last"; it is published in my volume called: "Six Short Plays," in America by Scribners.

With kind regards

Yours very truly

John Galsworthy

I believe an American manager has first acquired the rights in "The First & The Last"! Barry Egan Curtis Brown would know.

never forgets his drama, his clear and forceful dialogue, the humanity of his characters for a sermon. He has stern themes often, vitriolic ones, as in "The Forest," where the forest of big business is shown to be a trackless waste rather than a jungle; or "Loyalties," where he shows that each human is a slave of prejudices.

Galsworthy is perhaps less influenced by foreign methods than any other English writer in the theatre. He remains always the precise technician, always the tangible dramatist, with the candor and clarity of a Constable landscape. His characters are limned against a clear horizon. There is no chicanery of staging, no tricks of lighting, no surprise or violently sensational denouement, such as we adore in America. Nor has his dialogue the wit of Wilde, the aphorisms of Shaw, or the pungency of St. John Ervine. His people live and move and think and speak like ordinary human beings. There are no "bon-mots" or epigrams. Conversation moves along placidly, at times dully, as in so many English drawing-rooms; yet it is the perfectly fitting glove on a hand which moves dexterously and serenely. Rarely do human beings strain for brilliancy in everyday conversation. Wit has gone the way of Samuel Johnson. Madame Sand does not flourish in this day of radios and aeroplanes.

Galsworthy, Shaw, Barrie, Maugham, St. John Ervine, form the secure background to which latter-day English drama will pin its faith. John Masefield in his superb "Tragedy of Nan" adds the phosphorescent touch of genius which will carry its flaming banner into the future.

This heart-breaking poetic tale of a girl whose father was hanged for a theft which he did not commit is one of the finest creations in all literature. Where else have we been so stimulated by the passion and the pathos of a symbolic girl-mother? How can we forget Gaffer, the voice of the sea; or Jack, Nan's boy lover, too weak to sense the beauty of his sweetheart; or the deep surging, remorseless, incoming Severn tide, that tide which we pray will bear Nan outward to a better world. The lilt of gold butterfly wings passes through Nan's fantasy, the glory of a super-woman too great for the paltry surroundings in which it finds itself.

Masefield is perhaps the least English of any of the newer English dramatists. There is something of the Norse saga about his sea-tales, and a Gallic sense of beauty. He is sturdy of expression, fierce and rebellious in his espousal of the seaman and the hardships of his life. He shows us the light of many seaports in his sailors' consciousness. And the

artist's eternal pathos rings in poor "Dauber's" heartbreaks.

Masefield is the poetic torch by which the new drama is lighted down alleyways. His passion for truth, his knowledge of poet and peasant, his yearning for the candor which must be the base of any enduring philosophy, have been the light by which Miles Malleson, J. K. Munro, and H. S. Rubenstein have sprung into being. The art of Munro, too little known in America, reveals the caustic dramatist. Munro goes for his characterizations to cosmopolitan types, portraying their all-worldliness through their salient and colorful personalities. In his "At Mrs. Beams" we have life, naked and crystal clear—stark passion, gossip, altruism, and the deadening miasma of the inland boarding-house. In this minute mirror "The World and his Wife" come to play.

H. S. Rubenstein in his single production of "The House" has told many stories. The house, haunted by the past, full of memories which it carries secretively into the present, the house, holding so much that is hidden yet unburdening its secrets when occasion insists, is the theme of the play. Rubenstein possesses a novel technique. One feels not so much that a hand has written "The House" as that

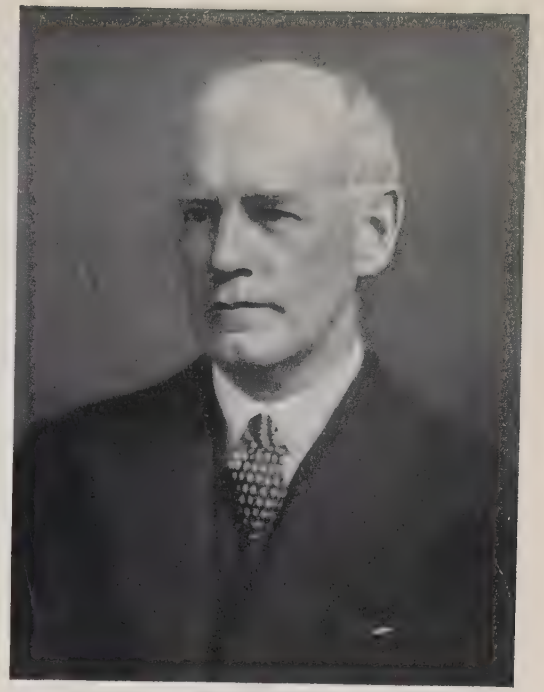
the house itself disgorges its story because it can no longer contain it.

The newer genius of Miles Malleson speaks for itself in "The Fanatics"—a wild and angry tearing at the reservations of our modern life. Young men and women in "good" society want to find out what is good for themselves. They want a "try" at marriage, want it earnestly, not for sexual amusement, but to find out with whom they may set up an eternal companionship! One woman speaks candidly of the men she has lived with, telling how it all came about; and we admire her for her honesty. Again and again we catch ourselves gasping at the conversational frankness of these young people, only to congratulate them for being so splendidly truthful.

Mr. Malleson has gone far in this play toward a new English drama. No symbolism or suggestion but a clear foreboding discussion of what is to become of us tomorrow if we dare not know ourselves today!

English audiences from gallery to stalls represent English thinking. There is nothing in the world so indicative of the character of a people than the pit-queue in London. It may form five, six, or even ten hours before the play; but it is always orderly. These good people who care enough for the theatre to wait hours in sun or rain for a "three-shilling

NICHOLAS HANNEN



JOHN GALSWORTHY

"THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS" BY SEAN O'CASEY

seat" form the backbone of the English theatre-going public. Pit-queues number brilliant and thoughtful critics of the drama, and, since the War has sent incomes down and theatre prices up, one hears often the most intelligent criticism of the drama from the teachers, clerks, or authors waiting long, patiently, hours in the queue.

Going to the theatre in London has strange surprises. No drama is too intense for the usheress to forget her tea-tray in the afternoon or her "ices," "chocs," or "coffee" in the evening. In time we become accustomed to the clatter of tea-things in the third act and the rustle of sweet-boxes all the way through the play. We become accustomed; but we do not admire.

Nor do we admire paying for our programs. Coming from America we find it difficult to understand that we should make an additional payment for something that belongs to the performance. But once we are broken into this in London, we shall manage to wangle our way through the Continent where we pay for a great deal more than programs.

Theatres in London are, for the most part, old-fashioned, although new ones are gradually being built. There is something beautiful in the tradition which preserves a "Haymarket" where Sarah Siddons acted, or a "Drury Lane" where Ellen Terry

paved her way to fame, or an "Old Vic" which still adds its classic Shakespearean glory to the 'busman's holiday.

England holds her old theatres in the same affection as it does Westminster Abbey. They may be cumbersome and half sunken underground, but they have been hers for many years, and so must not be wantonly destroyed.

In stage lighting and "tricks" of producing England cannot compare to the Continent or the United States. An avoidance of anything startling, new, or uncanny is inherent in the English director's idea of good production.

Men like Robert Atkins aim for classics in the drama. Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson produce great plays. Martin Harvey and Lillian Baylis cling to Shakespeare, and the brilliant Stage Societies produce Tchekov and plays of other lands. Nigel Playfair worships at the shrines of Dickens and John Gay, and revives Gilbert and Sullivan with regularity. J. M. Barrie appears at every Christmas season. Ibsen—at sporadic intervals.

All in all the English theatre is the veracious mirror of the English people—conservative, thoughtful, just, sane, sound and clear in its expressions of character and social conditions. The best writers of

the English drama need not fear criticism. They have solidity and a fine spirit which discards dross, which preserves carefully and with affection the things that are sweet and decent.

XVI: IRELAND – THE REBELLIOUS

Ireland has staged the drama of revolt. A phosphorescent mixture, this Irish drama, molded of fire and mud. The peculiar philosophy of a people who have followed the "plow and the stars."

The history of the Irish Theatre is freely intertwined with the history of the Abbey Players in Dublin. Few dramatists of note have flourished independently of the Abbey Theatre.

In Lady Gregory, Lord Dunsany, J. M. Synge, W. B. Yeats, and now in Sean O'Casey we have a drama, a theatre, and a philosophy of a nation all combined.

Irish drama is, perhaps, more symbolic of the later development of a people than any other drama on earth. The background of wet, upturned mud, the drab color of dull tenements, the reeking smell of ale-houses where the "Free State" is the dame of innumerable toasts, and the wild, evanescent tang of moor and sea, of an intangible sturdy humor, the harsh milling of crowds trying to find the stars through the gloom of many murders—this is the drama of the new Ireland.

Yet in all the mauling and milling, in the fight-

ing, arson, rapine dwells an unmistakable pathos, the repressed sobbing of many men, like children who cry for the moon of complete liberty.

The Abbey Theatre and the Abbey Players have grown from this background of rebellion and humor. Lady Gregory, Lord Dunsany at intervals, and W. B. Yeats, distil the humor. J. M. Synge contributes the tremendous undertone of yearning and sorrow. While Sean O'Casey spreads on the murders, the brawling, and the quaint raucous pathos with a trowel or a bludgeon.

J. M. Synge, alternately dreaming and starving in a hall bedroom at Oxford, was rescued by Masefield and set free to write his epics. Strange, lonely, silent even in the company of his comrades, Synge created for us a deathless "Playboy of the Western World," and his "Riders to the Sea" than which there is nothing of greater poetry in modern drama.

Like the Severn tide of Masefield, the sea cries out to Synge, sweeping in epic beauty about the humble lives of his people. They are motivated by it, and as it smiles, or howls, or devours, their lives are glad or mad. They dare not complain; it is their Fata Morgana. By its purpose their lives are charted.

Synge writes brilliant poetry. His drama is formed by the inner purpose of his vision. He seems

the orchestrated mouthpiece of the people among whom he lived. His lustrous lyre stretches its murmurs to the stars, and, alas, is silenced too soon. Synge passed prematurely, without the ultimate fulfilment of his genius. A strange figure dallying just long enough to leave his fragments of fire and grief.

Critics class Synge with Shelley. Like Shelley he was destined to daring, but to unfulfilled longings.

William Butler Yeats adds his touch of fantasy to the Irish Theatre, dealing in poetic allegory—more poet than dramatist.

Yeats loses in a finite appeal to an audience because of his medium. His is the rhythm of a "soul-theatre." His are poetic dramas which symbolize and deal in allegory but fail to become popular because of their failure to express clearly the concrete truth of life itself.

Yeats is a library dramatist, to be read and mused upon in seclusion, rather than seen in the theatre. Yet his sure touch of fantasy has added dignity to the drama of his country.

Lady Gregory is both the Harlequin and the Columbine of the Irish Theatre. Trenchant, witty, adding spice and understanding, she performs her graceful antics across the threshold of the Abbey Theatre. Hers is a delicious talent of unique flavor.

She glosses the surface of Irish life—in "Workhouse Wards," in village "Post Offices," in shady lanes, on gloomy wharves her village vagrants amuse and satisfy. Her "Hyacinth Halvey" is a figure of bubbling wit. Her people are always "Spreading the News" vicariously, and the "Rising of the Moon" brings a touch of racy pathos. Lady Gregory was the Mother of the Abbey Theatre, very much as Miss Horniman coddled her Manchester Repertory into growth. Lady Gregory actually nurtured physically and spiritually her struggling acting friends. When the theatre needed plays she wrote them; when they needed funds she procured them; and the better portion of her life was bound up with a group of people whose ideals were of the truest and finest in art. One need only see Sara Allgood and her bubbling, realistic associates to understand how great acting can be of the simplest and the most veracious materials.

The latest development in Ireland is the plumber-dramatist Sean O'Casey. Learning his theatre at first hand from life, peering into people's cellars, making stump speeches in public squares, arguing, puzzling, thinking, recording the turmoil and the latter-day problems of his addle-pated brothers, Sean O'Casey acquired a broad canvas. His plays are full of brawling, roistering, plotting, soaring, struggling

people—real people, human beings whose passions are not polished and whose manners are none too lovely. Life stalks rampantly across his scenes, screaming or praying—but always life, true to itself and its turmoils. At intervals his people stretch aching fingers and hoarse voices up to God.

What O'Casey lacks in finesse and compact dramatic construction he atones for in vivid drama. He gives us valid dramatic situations which spring quite naturally from accuracy of character delineation and a humanness of plot. Plots often, as in "The Shadow of a Gunman," and "The Plough and the Stars," seem to ramble off to nowhere. Suddenly the rambling stops abruptly, and our coach halts before a tragic cross-road where people run pell-mell to disaster. One sobs suddenly and sits fearfully in the dark theatre fearing the all too intense realism of these Irish players.

O'Casey is young, virile, audacious. His dialogue is brittle and stimulating. He does not dally for drawing room epigram or witticism, but proceeds brusquely, aiming at the sure fire turmoil of existence.

We can prophesy that with the encouragement of assured audiences in Dublin, London, and New York O'Casey will develop into one of the important dramatists of the modern theatre.

The wand of realism in the play extends to the

actor and the audience. The theatre as an entity in Ireland is a strangely veracious force. People argue roisterously with sincerity and strength. Audiences applaud their favorites with the gusto of the "Irish Free State."

The acting of the Irish players seems a replica of life. These players use little make-up, and are simply—themselves. They are masters of a brogue which cannot be imitated, of a simple, skilful use of body, voice, and gesture which is perfectly in tune with play and playwright.

The unity of the Irish Theatre is complete. A unique thing achieving that art which in its artlessness seems to approach perfection. We linger among the players who seem to be, not of the theatre, but of life itself.

XVII: THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL

It is difficult to realize, without the deepest consideration, the amount of artistic ability and achievement contained in the "Fest Spiele" at Salzburg. The summer of 1927 has undoubtedly proved a high water mark in this unique combination of opera and drama. An almost incomparable plane has been reached in stage direction, in musical leadership, in productions of superb artistic distinction.

The name of Max Reinhardt spells magic throughout the dramatic world. But one must know more of Mr. Reinhardt's methods and of the caliber of the men working with him to be able at all to estimate his genius.

Max Reinhardt, Dr. Franz Schalk, Bruno Walter, Joseph Messner, Ernest de Weerth, Hans Metzl, Tilly Losch, and a score of brilliant assistants in staging, costuming, lighting, and in production of magnificent operas, dramas, ballets, render this Festival a perfect synchronization of music and movement.

Mr. Reinhardt has concerned himself with the drama, wisely leaving the operas to Dr. Schalk, Joseph Messner, and Bruno Walter. He has staged

a production of "Everyman" in the courtyard outside the old "Dom-Kirche," which cannot soon fade from memory. He has conceived a lustrous ballet of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," for which he employed the music by Mendelssohn, and has produced a dramatic and pictorial version of Schiller's "Kabale und Leibe."

Dr. Franz Schalk, leader of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducts a performance of "Fidelio," which cannot be surpassed. Composed by the great Beethoven, sung by skilled German singers —Lotta Lehman in particular—"Fidelio" is a complete mosaic of German art. The difficulties encountered in other countries, where imperfect enunciation come from singers of varying nationalities cast in one performance, are not encountered in the homogeneous Salzburg productions—German artists, German musicians, German director—performing in perfect accord the work of a German composer.

"The Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Juan" are the works of the adored Mozart who, born and reared in Salzburg, knew little of the réclame which his art would bring to him and to his native town. In the modest apartment on the Gedritte Gasse, Mozart lived and worked, wrote and died. He knew much poverty and little ease in his youth, yet the oil-lit twilight of the modest home found him dreaming

"The Magic Flute," "Don Juan," and a host of operas and symphonies. Today many men and women climb the century-old stairs to pause and wonder at the simplicity of the composer who was one of the great stars in the world's firmament of music.

An aggregation of singers from the Vienna Opera Company, from the Berlin Opera House, from Dresden, from Frankfort—the best that Germany and Austria have to offer, render his operas superbly.

The Festival is so arranged that one important performance is given daily. When "Everyman" is played at five o'clock in the afternoon against the brooding pietistic background of the "Dom-Kirche" an evening Serenade of Beethoven's music follows it in the courtyard. Both performances have settings which the hand of man could not produce. Clouds drifting over jagged mountain peaks throw their shadows on the courtyards far below; swift-darting pigeons circle about the Tower of the 16th century cathedral; while from the near-by cloisters resound the echoes of "Jedermann" or the notes of a Beethoven concerto.

From steps in the rear, leading up to the broad platform, the actors of "Jedermann" climb to the stage, or sink slowly out of sight. To the eager audience they seem to rise and disappear miraculously. The historic legend of "Everyman,"

freshly woven by Hugo von Hoffmanstahl, becomes poignant with new beauty—when chanted in the aisles of the old cathedral. Players stroll in from side courts and off again, a band of strolling minstrels lingers for a moment to sing some ancient lyrics, and at the banquet scene choristers appear, as if torn from the leaves of an old illustrated hymnal. Jedermann's travail is the travail of us all. "Everyman," who is born alone and must die alone, who owns "Wealth" and is, in turn, owned by him; who, lonely and desperate cries for his "Love" and his "Best Friend" to die with him—must, by a fixed destiny, die alone. Only his "Good Deeds" (Werke) can go before him; only his "Faith" (Glaube) can go down the long road after.

Over this haunting epic of "Jedermann" Reinhardt has spread the mantle of his genius. Keenly conscious of the requisites of the 16th century drama, he has observed every detail of costuming and staging. His characters seem quietly to have stepped out from the past. With little or no make-up, with the ragged clothes of the poor in the Middle Ages, or again, with the shining gold of princes, this master craftsman, ably assisted by Herr Eduard Metzl, has given us a poem which must endure.

On "Kabale und Liebe"—a tale of love and intrigue in which Schiller does not hesitate to pattern

after Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," Reinhardt has impressed his sense of tragedy. Here, too, every detail of costuming and setting is carefully observed. Here, too, is a sense of appropriateness, of period, of realism. Here, too, is a brilliant gift of characterization and deep knowledge of his people.

Perhaps because Reinhardt knows, has lived among and loved the simple people of Austria, he can portray them so powerfully. Undoubtedly we depict best what we know best. And this wizard of the theatre may stroll among the nuns of the "Miracle," among the choristers of "Jedermann," or he may amuse himself with the fairy ballet of "Sommer Nacht's Traum" to show the variety of his talents; but it is in his dramas, in the care with which he handles comedy or tragedy, in the intuitive wisdom which guides him in his casting, in the quality of realism which directs the smallest detail of production that Reinhardt is supreme.

From this sense of drama he has strangely and suddenly departed in his rendering of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In "Sommer Nacht's Traum" Max Reinhardt is not much concerned with Shakespeare's text except as a basis for his ballet, for the pageant of his host of fairies, for his mass sense of light and color, of sound and rhythm. His fairy forest becomes a vast cathedral, rich and pompous.

THE PLAYERS FROM "THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

"PERIPHERY" BY FRANCIZEK LANGER

His fairies, so faintly clad that they seem never to have lived on sea or land, are buried beneath a mass of such magnificent satins that their dialogue becomes lost in an array of costumes. Only the "Players" have escaped the avalanche of wealth and bombast and high-heaped splendor. They and Puck remain witty and entertaining.

No one denies that Max Reinhardt can present gorgeous spectacles, that he can bewilder with a witchcraft of staging, lighting, and scenic settings. Platforms appear miraculously from out the earth, a hut is constructed in the midst of a forest, stars twinkle, high up in the firmament, great columns are lowered to make a royal hall, a moon grows, wanes, disappears.

Over all drifts the nebulous mist of Fairyland. Voices grow dim and fade. Oberon is gorgeous with waving plumes and satins. Titania is so beautiful and fragile that we fear she cannot endure. Puck wanders in and out—a gnome of endless movement, of sly wit. He dominates the scene with his wizardry. Fairyland becomes a regal domain in which fairies have always loitered over tree-tops, powdered with star-dust.

Yet with all the drama absent "Sommer Nacht's Traum" represents a gigantic achievement in staging, grouping, lighting, and costuming. Across the

curtainless stage a huge scrolled drop brings form and variety. Steps winding up in Russian arrangement through the orchestra give ample space for the illusion of fairies rising from the floor of the forest. A slice of sky with a knowing moon winks at Puck or the fairies stealing in from behind human trees which, abnormally, retain their arboreal position all evening. The action is continuous—only one long pause when the moon goes behind a cloud and the stars become dim, to bring the transported audience back to reality once more.

Reinhardt is a master of exits and entrances. In "Jedermann" as well as in "Midsummer Night's Dream" these casual entries of strolling players are too casual to be accidental.

No version of the Salzburg Festival would be complete without mention of the actors, who are so skilled that they can be likened to the great Russians. Their art is so simple as to be a perfect replica of life. Alexander Moissi and Paul Hartmann, Henrietta Thimig, Wladimir Sokoloff, Herman Moser, Hans Thimig, Lilli Darvas, and a score of other artists have been brought to a high state of perfection by Reinhardt into an ensemble of complete harmony.

As this Festival is played year after year in one of the most picturesque and romantic spots in the

world one's memories of the great "Fest Spiele" become inextricably interwoven with little Salzburg. Coiled in an arm of the Salzach River and under some of the most impressive peaks in all the Alps, Salzburg is an experience in exaltation. For exalted are both city and Festival. Looming over the city are high parapets which have kept watch upon "The Festung" for centuries. And all about the little town beautiful castles invite and allure. Near by romantic "König See" beckons, and just across the way the Geiegerswald tempts us to climb yet another mountain peak. Exquisite inland lakes and pine forest, long winding roads, beautiful mountain grottoes beckon.

It is as if the hand of Nature had set its seal on the work of the hand of Man, as if the voice of Nature had whispered low and lovingly: "Pour ye your exaltations up to me—for I am listening."

XVIII: THE BAVARIAN FESTIVAL

All Germany and Austria runs to festivals. Yet each has its specialty—Salzburg, Drama and Music—Magdeburg, a complete Theatre Exhibition—Bayreuth, an orgy of Wagnerian music, and Munich, a riot of operas and plays. Munich actually represents Bavaria, and her "Bayerische Fest Spiele" includes some of the greatest operatic productions in the world.

Munich itself—cultured, courteous, and kindly—is, perhaps, one of the most ideal cities in the world for a Festival. Odd moments between operas can always be spent richly in the old and new Pinakotek, the Glyptotek, the Deutsches Museum, or in the beautiful home of Franz Lenbach where art treasures are displayed.

Munich spells art—in her numerous museums, art exhibits, concert halls, in her broad clean avenues, in her city beautiful.

Here are many theatres and opera houses. One can journey out to the Künstler Haus to see a "Tanz-Abend," with strange varieties of dance and music. One can see dance-plays: "The Pagoda," "The Land Fest"—cameos of other days. In this same "Künst-

ler Haus" one can also see the dramatic "King Nicolo" by Frank Wedekind.

These are but part of the Bavarian Festival, as are the great performances of "Tristan and Isolde," "The Marriage of Figaro," Mozart's rarely-produced but beautiful "Flight from the Seraglio," "The Meistersinger," and "Die Fleder Maus."

By way of variety one can see a German translation of Moretto's old Spanish "Donna Diana," two new one-act plays—"Alcestis" and "Ollopotrida," and the brilliant "Twelve Thousand" by Bruno Frank.

On Sunday mornings there are good military concerts in the public Square, and on Sunday afternoons Alexander Moissi startles us with a new interpretation of Ibsen or Shaw.

Hugo Von Hoffmanstahl, author of the new "Everyman," gives us a strong and memorable drama in "Die Schwierige," and Gustave Waldau, Munich's stage idol, performs "King Nicolo."

The acting in the Bavarian Festival, while without the dramatic distinction of the artists in Salzburg, is uniformly good. German actors are intense and sincere. Erika Mann, Gustave Waldau, Hans Schweikart, rise to brilliant heights.

Perhaps the greatest outstanding attribute of the Bavarian Festival is the skill with which the many

productions are managed, and the ease with which the large audiences are handled. A different performance every day, sometimes two a day, often the same performance at different theatres on consecutive days, involving rapid transportation and lightning changes in announcement—all prove high efficiency. General Director Pape and Dr. Ernst Stahl have proven their ability to handle a big Festival. Above all, Bavarian audiences are appreciative. One is impressed with the courtesy of the numerous attendants, with the spaciousness and restful atmosphere, the fine theatres, the low price of theatre tickets, with the great operas so magnificently rendered.

An afternoon (the operas begin at four and last until ten P.M.) at the Prinz Regenten Theatre cannot be forgotten. The long intervals in which one strolls in the Gardens, in the Promenoir, or in the Buffet where delicious food is constantly served—afford charm, rest, and comfort.

Munich knows how to cater to the physical, as well as to the mental needs of her theatre-goers. A holiday spent in the lovely old city at the time of the Bayerischen Festival becomes a treasured memory.

XIX: THE GERMAN THEATRE EXHIBITION AT MAGDEBURG

An interesting little city, just two hours from Berlin, Magdeburg would be well worth seeing, even without its great Theatre Exhibition. It lies peacefully at the base of picturesque mountains and drowses beside one of the little inland seas, dotted with islands, for which Germany is justly famous. One could spend many interesting hours in the tiny town with its quaint and narrow streets and its brooding old castles. In this sequestered spot one sees a Theatre und Kunst Ausstellung such as has seldom been given anywhere.

In order to do even scant justice to the Exhibition, one should remain more days than hours. Certainly a short chapter cannot convey the extent and detail of the various displays. When the Germans love art they love it thoroughly and their knowledge of their subject cannot be surpassed.

The Exhibition at Magdeburg deals with the beginnings of art—far back in Greece. Every form and style of playhouse is presented. We watch subtle changes creeping in, scarcely knowing when these changes occurred. The Germans, in addition to be-

ing thorough, are artistic and have spared no expense or effort to make this history of the theatre completely illuminating.

A great space has been given by the City of Magdeburg to the Exhibition. Fine new buildings of architectural interest have been erected. Within them are broad, well-lighted corridors down which surging crowds can lose themselves. There are many beautiful rest-places, and through attractive openings one can see the gleaming red-striped awning of the inevitable café. Everywhere there is good music, and the crowds are orderly and interested, listening intently to well-informed guides furnished by the Administration of the Exhibition.

A wealth of material overwhelms us. We want to linger long near the early Greek theatres. To see more closely the wax figures of old chorus men poised, as in life, with heroic gesture, on the stage. We peer through high columns and over rows of semi-circular seats, coming as near as we have ever come to a reproduction of drama in the days of Aeschylus.

But we must pass on. Here are the theatres of the Middle Ages, placed in the naves of churches. The beautiful theatre of Hans Sachs, which is but a part of a great cathedral, half curtained off from the nave and pews behind. There are high stained-glass

windows through which rich colored light streams over the heads of these mute players who breathe the spirit of long ago.

Outside, on the steps of the church, are wax figures—some of the "audience" lingering to discuss the play. These wax figures are as interesting as those of the actors, with every detail of costume and attitude complete.

These early groups of actors of the 15th and 16th century Morality and Mystery plays, with the Christ figure as the pivotal point, do not soon fade from memory. Drama becomes living history when we see theatre, actor, audience, and the gradual evolution of each idea illustrated in model form.

Theatre buildings after this religious period became diversified and unique. There was the outdoor theatre with but a few wooden posts to make the sets. There were the theatres above stables, theatres that were parts of other buildings, or, again, part of a great civic center, which in many cities was composed of opera house and theatre. There were the great Dorn or Rath-House Theatres in the early 17th century in Germany, in which the playhouse was but a part of the general civic forum.

And early in the 18th century came the "Comedia dell' Arte." In exquisite Italy dainty and clever actors formed a company of their own, who knew so

well how to mimic, how to make an act grotesque or beautiful. Here are the unique clowns who inspired Shakespeare's muse, and here again, the lovely languishing leading lady, immortalized in flowered China, peering coyly through her mask at her lover in the shrubbery near by.

The Comedia dell' Arte restored popularity to the mask, discarded and forgotten since ancient Greece. It revived an interest in this plastic modeling of various moods to which Germany returned in the early 18th century, and again today.

The methods of building the theatres of bygone days were interesting. There is the playhouse in which the seats are arranged to the right, with a broad space on the left for the entrance of the audience, and for the "promenoir." There is the circular theatre, arranged after the Greek model, in which the audience is seated all about the stage. None of these early 16th or 17th century theatres had balconies, galleries, or loges. It was only in the "Comédie Française" in the days of Molière and Racine, when fashion began to patronize "First Nights." Then boxes were arranged for distinguished visitors only. One of the most interesting of all the models was the little theatre in Venice, approached by gondolas, and built on a tiny island in the lagoon where Shakespeare's "Merchant of

Venice" was given its Italian première. Truly an appropriate setting for Shakespeare's great drama, with the skyline of Venice in the distance for background.

The early days of the 19th century showed a marked lavish expenditure in theatre construction. There is the great Burg Theatre in Vienna, more magnificent than an opera house. There is the Stadt Theatre in Berlin, comprising a whole block of buildings—museums, schools, work-shops. There is the "Freie-Bühne" in Berlin and the "Vol Verein." And all over Germany, in Wiesbaden, Magdeburg, Dresden, Stuttgart, Bremen are the "Stadt Theatres" showing the utmost splendor in design and execution.

Many of these theatres contain magnificent foyers filled with paintings, statues, marbles, tapestries.

Scenic sets, strangely enough, develop from the ornate to the simple, from the rococo period to the primitive. Formerly scenic sets and costumes were intricate in every detail. Today they aim at the complete exclusion of the non-essential.

An entire history of costuming is developed in Magdeburg. And the vision of the play is complete with costume and scene exactly as they were in former times.

One notes a general similarity in the theatres of

Europe until the Twentieth Century. Even Russia followed in the wake of magnificence and decoration. Yet, early in the present century, fashions began to be highly individualized. Russia, under the tutelage of Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre, Germany under Reinhardt, France under Gémier, and Austria with half a dozen brilliant young directors, among them Karl Heinz, Martin, and Ernest Toller—have developed distinct and startling individualities in their native playhouses.

At Magdeburg we see it all—the fiery simplicity and New Art of the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow, the magnificent production of Dr. Bulow in the Burg Theatre in Vienna, the weird and strange simplicity of the Freie-Buhne, and the Voll-Verein in Berlin, and the modernity of Jacques Copeau in Paris. Even the barn-yard staging of "Chantécler" and scenes of the "Nibelungen Ring" are present. We see Wagner on a revolving stage, and behold experiments in every form—some so weird as to be almost unbelievable.

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of the Exhibition is the contrast in methods of staging. Here we see a gorgeous "Turandot" staged in great lavishness in the "Stadt Theatre" of Berlin—a costly and unbelievable production; while near by is a modest, charming little French "Turandot" imply-

ing by simpler suggestion all the glory of its more overwhelming sister.

Here, also, is every development in modern lighting. From the ancient guttering candle to the period where electric lights were placed behind colored arches, and beyond—to the present when the Schwabe Company of Germany and Austria have perfected the greatest illusions in modern stage lighting.

In this quaint and marvelous exhibition with its endless reproductions of plays we get photographs of exquisite dancers. Dancing is an art which has been brought to a high degree of perfection in Germany and Austria, and this exhibition gives it an important place. So much to be learned and so little time to learn it in.

Tourists stream in to Magdeburg by train, by car, or trudge in on foot; boys and girls, men and women —all eager to learn about the theatre they love so well and yearn so to enter and to know at first hand.

XX: THE YIDDISH ART THEATRE AND "THE HABIMA"

Yiddish actors belong to no particular land. Coming originally from Russia, Poland, Austria, and Roumania, they speak a tongue that is a jargon of German, Hebrew, and Slavic, in which gesture and intonation form an important part.

Yiddish drama is a personal drama, so highly colored and emotionalized that one finds it difficult, almost impossible, to separate it from the actors who interpret it. The typical Yiddish play is seldom significant *per se*, but when vitalized by a group of expert actors, both drama and interpretation become all-absorbing.

There are numerous Yiddish theatres throughout Poland, Soviet Russia, the Ukraine, Roumania, Austria, and other eastern European countries. In the western world New York has quite a few. There are others in Berlin, Paris, London, and South America. There is, however, only one Yiddish Art Theatre in all America, the theatre directed by Maurice Schwartz.

In the typical Yiddish theatre, plays, actors, and audiences are vibrant and animated. Yiddish art

knows little of repression. It is ecstatic, exclamatory, and filled with violent comedy or the brutal air of tragedy. Yiddish actors almost destroy themselves on the altar of emotionalism, yet their sentimentality often becomes sentiment and their native sincerity persuades us of their integrity.

The fertility of the Yiddish theatre is amazing. Yiddish actors are much like Irish actors in their duplication of life. They seem to be merely themselves. They are possessed of the utter artlessness which conceals, but does not deny art. They come in shawls and "shaitels" (wigs worn by orthodox Jewish women), in long, antiquated garments, occasionally with push-carts, with all the color and custom of East Side tenement life.

The Jews are a non-selfconscious race. An idea is no sooner born with them than it is expressed. Yiddish dramatists do not pause often for deliberation. Their dramas scarcely seem to be the products of conscious thought. A condition of fancied or real wrong is the signal for a torrent of language. Playwright, actors, audiences, tear at their vitals in violent outbursts and exclamations.

Their art seldom touches the subjective. Their theatre is a replica of themselves. They stand or sit shawled or clad in ill-matched garments, discussing every subject under the sun.

Incomparably higher, of course, is the quality of the Yiddish Art Theatre. This playhouse has housed many notable productions and actors. It was here that the dramatization of Andreyev's "Seven Who Were Hanged" first saw production in America. It was here that the "Dybbuk" and the "Golem" first swept across the foot-lights. It was here that we absorbed in dramatized form the inimitable humor of Sholem Aleichem, that we saw the works of Gogol, Tolstoi, and Sholem Asch, Tchekov, Gorky. The fame of Maurice Schwartz, Muni Weisenfreund, Mark Schweid, Anna Appel, Lea Rosen, Ben Ami, Baratoff, Celia Adler, Bertha Gersten, and Lazar Fried has spread not only through the East Side but up to Broadway.

Recently Broadway has annexed permanently some of the English-speaking Yiddish actors. Muni Weisenfreund has proven a sensation first in "We Americans" and then in "Four Walls." John Golden, the astute producer, saw the art of the youth of twenty-three, who could portray life from eighteen to eighty. He gave him "leads" in his Broadway productions. Weisenfreund has a highly individualistic art. Stern, honest, unaffected. He lives with equal facility in the rôles of the aged Jewish father and the young Jewish student or criminal. He analyzes unerringly, and portrays in finite detail. Ben Ami fluctuates

between playing the lead in "John" for the "Actors' Theatre" and resuming at intervals his old rôles in the idyllic plays of Perez Hirshbein in Yiddish. He is possessed of deep spirituality. One cannot soon forget his heart-breaking "Schweiger" done with the exquisite Ann Harding in English at the Mansfield Theatre last season.

Perhaps two of the most outstanding actors from Yiddish theatres are Rudolph and Joseph Schildkraut—father and son. Joseph has long been so absorbed by Broadway successes on stage and screen that one has almost forgotten his Yiddish parentage. Rudolph, too, successful in American drama, at periods leaves the Yiddish stage—but is possessed of the highest qualities of Yiddish art and has scores of admirers both in England and the United States.

Mark Schweid, after his phenomenal success in "The Seven Who Were Hanged" in New York and during the European tour of the Yiddish Art Theatre a few seasons ago, attracted the attention of the Theatre Guild and now plays three parts in "Marco Millions." Lazar Fried, also of the Yiddish Art Theatre—was impanelled for the films where he made a personal success in "Salome of the Tenements."

Yiddish actors lend an exotic color to their art. They are both emotional and highly intelligent.

Born to suffering, learning early to mime and gesticulate, the Yiddish actor betrays only on long acquaintance that his stage suffering is expertly assumed.

It was in the Yiddish theatre that we first heard the wailing ecstatic soul of a people. It was here that we first saw immigrants who mingled the patois of a New World with the jargon of an Old; that we saw the art of a creative, restless, individual people, full of fiery passion, with power for profound suffering, for child-like ebullient joy—for silences as poignant as the white steppes on those snowy endless frontiers where thousands of their dear ones had gone down into the eternal silence. Artists all—almost without exception. In their naïve bursts of expression, in their sense of realism, in their buoyant philosophy which breaks through the patter of marriage-brokers or the talk of shop-keepers. And in the exhortations of proletariat editors who feed their readers on food for reckless rebellion.

There are distinctly contrasting Yiddish theatres in New York City, ranging from the cheap variety theatre on Grand Street, to the prosperous Yiddish Art Theatre on Second Avenue, directed by the artistic but dictatorial Maurice Schwartz.

The Yiddish theatre may be found in practically every large city in the country. In some cities the

classics of Jacob Gordon and Abraham Goldfaden hold the stage, while in others cheap comedies, burlesques, buffooneries are presented to attract the masses.

The Yiddish theatre, like Broadway, has an eye to the box office. It is only in rare instances that creative directors stress dramas of quality.

Greatest of all the Jewish dramatic organizations is the "Habima," that magnificent group of players whose language on the stage is classic Hebrew. The "Habima" is in reality a protégé of the Moscow Art Theatre; for it was Stanislavsky who found Zemach, the director of the "Habima," and his fellow workers, struggling in an attic theatre after an exhausting day in shop or factory. Zemach's ambition to revive classical Hebrew on the modern stage resulted in a new technique, and in a series of magnificent, overwhelming dramas unlike anything on earth.

As the "Habima" players do "Jacob's Dream," "The Eternal Jew," the "Dybbuk," the "Golem," and "Cain and Abel," we find ourselves at a loss for adjectives. Zemach has his own technique—sublime and terrible, his own art of make-up, a gigantic caricaturing of character. His actors possess fine singing voices that blend melodiously with the mystical and legendary rôles. His artists seem to emerge from the primeval sources of man's nativity and to

be on intimate terms with the hidden powers of creation.

Mystical scenes and lighting, great enveloping music, splendid non-conscious acting thrown against a background of Man's first habitat, combine to draw this exalted group up to the plane they dream about. We come from their productions in a spirit of exaltation and with a feeling of having peered into the Beyond.

XXI: NEGRO DRAMA

"Give the colored man a book and you give him a dose of poison," declares Abraham in "Abraham's Bosom," and the thought behind this expression forms the keynote to the negro question of today.

What are we going to do with the colored man now that we have invited him into our universities and our cultural institutions? Are we going to give him intellectual and physical freedom and yet lock him up behind the static bars of social ostracism?

The new mental freedom has at least unlocked the doors of his dramatic genius. One says "*genius*" advisedly, for the negro was born to mime, to sing, to simulate all the moods and deeds of his silent hours, years, centuries.

The negro is a natural actor, as he is a natural singer. They are children of a far-off country where their ancestors greeted life with song and gesture and story. We need only scan some of the programs of today to see how they are doing this very thing in the dramas and the principal comedies of the United States.

Paul Robeson, Julius Bledsoe, Lawrence Brown,

Rose McClendon, Edward Wilson, have thrilled us with voices that contain much of the mystery and the rhythmic harmonies of far-off forests, rivers, streams. And now Edward Wilson shows us in "Porgy" and "Meek Mose"—how a negro can act, stage, produce —recreate the entire life of his race on the stage.

From the days when Edward Sheldon gave us "The Nigger" at the Century, the colored man has been experiencing a rising crescendo of dramatic development. Octavus Roy Cohen has kept the interest alive, literarily in his unique short stories. Eugene O'Neill fanned the flame in "All God's Chillun's Got Wings," and "Emperor Jones"; Paul Green stirred the embers of his spiritual life in "Abraham's Bosom." David Belasco gave us his passion story in "Lulu Belle"—a negro Carmen; Arthur Hopkins gave us the operatic rhythm of his sensations in "Deep River"; the Guild gives us his folk-lore in "Porgy"; and now we have Edward Wilson, writing, acting, and producing a colorful mélange of his existence in "Meek Mose."

Negro actors walking directly into the theatre from their jobs as porters, elevator men, humble occupations of all sorts—assume quite easily almost any rôle that is assigned to them. They are simple, imitative children, who quite unconsciously catching

fire from the slightest "cue"—give us the quick, brilliant reaction of impersonation.

A negro is always an unconscious actor. Watch the colored porter in your Pullman train; how eagerly he enters into all the lives around him. How sympathetic he becomes if you are in trouble; how the deep notes of his voice resound with grief or joy according to the sparkle or depression of your fleeting mood.

The ease with which a negro learns his "part" is amazing! Almost uncanny. And his artistic selflessness in rehearsal is equally astounding. He can run the gamut of the pity, fear, terror, heart-sick agony of an "Abraham" to the ingenuous shiftlessness of a "Porgy" with "Crown's Bess."

The rites and rituals, the melodies of negro life invite dramatization and musicalization. A negro prayer-meeting compounded of song and superstition is a medley of movement and rhythm and sound. Superstition runs riot; not only in men's minds, but in the shadows on the wall; and in clogging, shuffling feet. The very inhibitions of their beliefs, mysticism, fears, are the cues to strange, tense drama. A prayer-meeting becomes a dramatic orgy, poignant with meaning. Rolling eyes, waving arms, shuffling feet are the mute orchestral accompaniments which harmonize in basic poetry of form.

Goat Alley is the colorful background of endless human dramas. The open doors of dance halls which blaze with rhythm and jazz form a brilliant background for unique story. Life creeps out somnolently or gay. Tawdry, gaudy, or bawdy. Life in "Nigger Heaven" is always individual and unique And from the riot of the senses in "Lulu Belle" to the *decent* devotion of "Porgy"— one can run the gamut of many moods and changes.

Yet we are only at the beginning of the drama of a people,—who have not yet fully learned themselves. Who have had only glimpses of their ambitions and their ragged, half-filled longings. The notes of whose voices try to tell us of the passions of their yesterdays, and the hopes of their tomorrows. Notes which reach back into the jungle of their memories—a jungle which is as yet an uninterpreted morass.

They have voices compounded of tears and laughter! Voices with many sobs. Theirs is the still frustrated drama of a people living among strangers. Relegated to the dim corners of our days. Or kept often in those kitchens and basements where the very valid longings of their lives do not reach up to 'drawing-rooms' where the "Negro Question" may be the question of the hour!

Theirs is a drama compounded of memories, tears, laughter. And the dramas which reach perhaps unto the stars!

. . . . . .

Among the negro dramas of the past few years, plays which have demonstrated the negro's surer hold on drama, are "Appearances" by Garland Anderson, "Roseanne" by Nan Bagley Bishop, "Children" by Guy Bolton and Tom Carlton, "They That Sit in Darkness" by Mamie P. Burrill, "The Yellow Tree" by Byrd Busey, "Caleb the Degenerate" by Joseph S. Cotter, "Justice" by Butler Davenport, "The Racial Tangle" by Henry F. Downing, "The Star of Ethiopia" by W. E. Dubois, "The Death Dance" by Thelma Duncan, "The Forest" by John Galsworthy, "White Dresses," "Granny Bolling," "The Hot Iron," "End of the Road," "Prayer Meetin'," "Sam Tucker," "Ole Wash Lucas," "The No 'Count Boy," and "In Abraham's Bosom" by Paul Green, "Hazel" by May White Ovington, "The Black Tie" by George Middleton, "The Noose" by Tracy Mygatt, "The Dreamy Kid," and "The Emperor Jones" by Eugene O'Neill, "Judge Lynch" by Wm. R. Rogers, Jr., "Mortgage," "The Victims," and "Compromise" by Willie Richardson, "The Rider of Dreams" by Ridgeley Torrence, "Kabnis"

by Jean Toomer, "The Bird Child" by Lucy White, "Taboo" by Mary H. Wyborg, "The Black Doctor" by Thomas Archer, "Genefrede"—The Howard Players—and "The Open Door" by Alice Ware.

"MEEK MOSE" BY EDWARD WILSON

"IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM" BY PAUL GREEN

GEORGE ARLISS

EUGENE O'NEILL

XXII: THE UNITED STATES – THE ADOLESCENT

That America is young should not militate against her success in the theatre. Her youth is restless and insurgent. It dashes all over the universe, drawing its inspiration from the theatres of many lands. It is a dramatic youth, ranging beyond the boundaries of Maine and California, peering into the mesas of Mexico, trekking across the steppes of Russia, mingling with the sophisticates of the Continent. It is youth budding into early fruition, holding aloft its new banner proudly, knowing that its theatre is to be the crucible of the world's drama.

The theatre of America was slow in awakening to a consciousness of its own values. For decades it donned the costumes of other countries. Behind its footlights strode imitative actors who borrowed their technique from Bernhardt, Terry, Dusé, Irving, Macready, and others. And its stage directions were adapted from Sardou or Scribe, from Molière or from Henry Arthur Jones.

Slowly, gropingly, young American drama came into being. Bronson Howard and Clyde Fitch, the apostles of the cities; Augustus Thomas, pioneer of

the West; the trail of Mark Twain; color from Bret Hart; Eugene Field and Owen Wister—these made the beginnings which developed into the present-day American theatre.

From the great open spaces of "Arizona," "In Missouri," and "Shenandoah," to the more intriguing themes of "The Witching Hour," "The Harvest Moon," "As a Man Thinks," and "Copperhead," Augustus Thomas has steadily laid the firm foundations of the American theatre. His is a sturdy dramatic talent, drawing its material from national resources and disdaining to borrow from the Continent. Mr. Thomas was one of the important factors in our young theatre. With a keen sense of stage direction, himself an actor, he has woven into his plays clean-cut characteristic Americans. His themes are reminiscent of that early, youthful valor which was young America; and the character of his plays is unlike anything coming from foreign soil. Augustus Thomas' dramas still remain good plays, however much we may wander into Expressionism or the later movements of the theatre today.

Clyde Fitch probes more deeply into American psychology. In his half-a-hundred plays there are all varieties of developments dealing with the passions of American men and women. Like Pinero, Fitch loitered in drawing rooms, and analyzed the

ambitions of social "Climbers," or the gnawing desires of "The City." Like Sardou, he constructed highly polished plots, the intricacies of which reflected his sheer artistry. Yet, unlike Pinero or Sardou, Fitch aimed at a national psychology. His dwellers in little towns longing for the city were not isolated instances, but rather symbols of a general condition—small-town humanity longing for the poisonous privileges of urban life.

In the flawlessly constructed and shimmering drawing-room dramas resided the deeper essence of American man- and womanhood. Fitch could be brutal, as well as polished. His tragic drama of "The City" digs under the surface of accepted conditions and stirs the stagnant mud beneath. Fitch could tell "The Truth" daringly, powerfully, yet leave a trail of half-expressed sadness in the telling. Fitch could begin a play with a funeral, yet imply that the funeral was the least tragic occurrence in the drama. And Fitch could see through and beyond the raw American of the moment into the more sophisticated one of the future.

The plays of Clyde Fitch savor more of the Continent and Pinero than do those of other American dramatists. He has varied semblances of "Iris," and many of his characters are arrested in "Mid-Channel." For Clyde Fitch spent much time abroad,

gaining for his plays a Continental polish. He has been accused of wanting to forget his Americanism. Yet those who probe deeply enough into his people divine that they are fundamentally American, as typical of American society as are the farmers of American homes. Fitch was clear-visioned enough to know that the European ingredient is present in America in no negligible quantity, and that the toadying of numerous Americans to the courts of the Continent is also typical of a percentage of American citizens.

Clyde Fitch, Augustus Thomas, and Bronson Howard dramatize the more easily analyzed America. They treat of the days when life was simple—more a matter of plain loving, earning, and spending, when morality was simple, when there were fewer grays and more blacks and whites, when people were not termed amoral or unmoral but just moral or immoral, when marriage was more of a sacrament and less of a diversion, when marriages were easier and divorces more difficult, when Sunday was still the day for one's "best clothes," with the Sunday dinner at home and church-going and family communion, when autos and aeroplanes were not an everyday affair, and radios, pocket flasks, and cigarettes were not an everyday equipment, when Prohi-

bition still prohibited, and women longed to be mothers and hovered over their babies' lives.

The dramas of these days could in a sense be easily more dramatic, if playwrights would take for their themes the simple conflicts of everyday men and women, if they would but write of primitive desires and not of evanescent tastes, if girls were still thrilled by proposals and young men still dreamed of vine-covered cottages and partners in their struggles for existence.

Today everything has changed. Even the East Side of the big cities have their warped moral codes. Gunmen are prolific—not always armed with visible guns, but with weapons of destruction aimed at family life and a sense of security.

Young girls insist upon knowing all of life—and trying everything, from marriage to individual domiciles, their own cars, jobs, and liquor supplies.

Young wives will not remain undramatically at home in the kitchen or the nursery. Their autos take them to their own shops or political jobs, and their children's bedtime stories are replaced by the synopsis of the newest play or film.

Home has become a place to store one's clothing, have one's bridge game, or to retire to for a few days to avoid a nervous break-down.

The telephone works overtime, morning and eve-

ning, getting one's "dates" in order. One's husband is a grouch if he isn't ready in dress-clothes four or five times a week for the inevitable dinner and theatre party.

Life has become a cross-word puzzle of learning how to make the income do and finding places for tea and lunch "dates" where one is not apt to meet one's wife or husband.

Hence the newer psychology and the newer material for the drama. Playwrights are forced to seek in the "flapper" a heroine to answer their needs, and in "The Best People" or "Dancing Mothers" inspiring ladies about whom to weave their plots.

We have prolific playwrights like Owen Davis who flood us with voluminous commentaries on current life, or like Anne Nichols who immortalizes in "Abie's Irish Rose" the ever-interesting blend of contrasting peoples, or like Susan Glaspell who turns the calcium firmly on our "Inheritors," Americans who have proved unworthy of their heritage, or like Sidney Howard who gives us crude ladies in "Ned McCobb's Daughter," amorous barbers in "They Knew What They Wanted," and the typical possessive American mother in "The Silver Cord."

We have a new and important young dramatist in Paul Green who, in "Abraham's Bosom"—the Pulitzer Prize winner—and in "The Field God," has

gone into the mountains of North Carolina and told us with poignant pen the suppressed drama of the lives of the "niggers" of the South. Paul Green writes inspired dialogue, pregnant with virile young life. He dares to tell freely and at length of the sacred places in men's souls.

We have Lulu Vollner, who knows her Kentucky mountains in her valorous "Sun-Up," her American love of decency in "The Shame Woman," and who writes simply and freshly.

We have George M. Cohan waving the American flag all over the stage, yet mirroring a very typical page of American life in "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway" and in "The Home Towners."

We have George Kelly who develops swiftly into a profound and important thinker. The most far-seeing critic could not have prophesied that the author of "The Show-Off," "Craig's Wife" and "Daisy Mayme" would ever write and produce "Behold the Bridegroom."

Brilliantly written, expertly directed, formed with a high purpose, this latest Kelly play touches new planes of power. It shows its author to be possessed of insight and fearless execution. It shows mastery of dialogue, characterization, the subtle quality of bringing people to life in their dreams, their inner sorrows, their despairs.

At odd moments there is the memory of Pinero —the wretched end of Paula Tanquery, the aching love of Iris. But the technique of the modernist Kelly discards Pinero and stalks fearlessly in long dialogues or in intense mental analyses of his heroine's wretched life.

From George Kelly the American theatre has received much and expects much more.

There are other American playwrights who depict various phases of our existence. Sam Shipman writes a great play about American womanhood in "The Day Lady," or curious cross-sections of life as in "Cheating Cheaters," or becomes international in "East and West." He is a trenchant and caustic critic of life.

Philip Barry progresses from "In a Garden," "You and I," and "White Wings" to the scintillating after-dinner comedy of "Paris-Bound." Expert in dialogue, skilled in denouement, Barry discusses sparklingly the simple fact that woman never understands man's desires until she has experienced similar desires of her own. Barry goes far towards elevating American comedy to the plane of Jean Jacques Besnard and of Somerset Maugham.

Edna Ferber and George Kaufman write with fluent skill of "A Royal Family" of actors on Broadway. Together they capture character and charac-

teristic. They produce swift-moving drama, alive and close packed with theatrical incident which amuses, stimulates, absorbs.

George Kaufman seizes with trenchant wit upon the foibles of our "Butter and Egg" men, upon our "Dulcys," and upon the ambitious but unrecognized Barrymores along the Rialto.

And we have David Belasco, dramatist as well as brilliant producer—the Belasco who but yesterday carved for us the immortal "Girl of the Golden West," "The Auctioneer," "The Music Master" and who today descends to the depths of "Lulu Belle."

We have Zoë Akins who delivers a sparkling jewel in "Declassé," and then wanders strangely into undramatic mazes. And we have Rachel Crothers who gave us "The Three of Us" and many carefully written and directed American plays.

There is, too, young Maurine Watkins who startled large audiences with "Chicago," a brilliant and honest satire on tawdry yellow journalism. There are Philip Dunning and George Abbot who burst into violent prominence with their gaudy silhouette of "Broadway." We have Maxwell Anderson and Lawrence Stallings who gave us an imperishable epic in "What Price Glory"—the first dramatists in America who dared to paint war in reality and not in flamboyant theatricalism.

And we have Eugene O'Neill, known in many lands, and watched carefully as he passes on from the exquisite, moving dramas of "Anna Christie," "Beyond the Horizon," "The Emperor Jones," and the "S. S. Glencairn" to the more involved mysticism and the spiritualism of his later plays.

We Americans are glad to boast of O'Neill, and rightly. One can wander to the study of Benavente in Spain, of Pirandello in Italy, of Reinhardt in Berlin, Galsworthy in London, Schnitzler in Austria, and find there complete editions of O'Neill. He is regarded as *the* American dramatist. His "Emperor Jones" is the drama of psychologic fear; his "Anna Christie" vies with the eternal "Liliom" in the color and the ache of her existence.

The early O'Neill seems the typical product of young America. He is simple, brilliant, and poetic in his dialogue, with a Wanderlust which sends his sailors to the South Seas or the ports of China with a somnolent melancholy, with an understanding of the under-dog. He is a pal of vagrants on park-benches, and is at home in water-front saloons and in the holds of sailing vessels. Yet he shows wisdom and comprehension in the caricaturing of rich men as in the masks of the "Hairy Ape," or the scenes of "Marco Millions," or in the overwhelming splendor and philosophy of "Lazarus Laughed."

O'Neill knows his theatre. He knows the great conflicts of mankind, the suppressed starvation of New England, the voice of passion in "Desire Under the Elms," the guttering candle in vagrant sailors' dark cabins, the heart of the prostitute Anna, which was only the misunderstood heart of a simple wife and mother.

O'Neill knows also greed and passion in the heart of man. He has his moments of divine poetry, of illuminating language. His people cry for the "monkey in the moon" and see the pale shadow of the moon pass slowly over the empty spaces in their lives.

O'Neill himself has passed from simplicity into mysticism, from being the chronicler of deed to the chronicler of thought, from the exterior to the interior of men's lives. Strangely enough, he has not added any great amount of originality to the world's imaginative drama. The masks of the "Great God Brown" were born centuries ago in Greece, rehabilitated in the Morality plays of the sixteenth century, and resurrected in modern Germany. Franz Werfel uses symbolism with greater flash and daring, and Walter Hasenclever penetrates more informatively and with greater brilliance into the inner motives of mankind.

Yet O'Neill must follow the path, be it straight

or crooked, of his own ultimate development. Those of us who love the clarity, the fine integrity of his earlier dramas cannot but deplore these latter-day departures. With the expansion of his dramatic soul has come, perhaps, a broader horizon to himself and a narrower one to his audiences. We grope futilely in the mazes of Dion Anthony's changing masqueries and yearn for the simplicity of "Anna" and the poetry of "That Old Davil Sea."

The end of O'Neill is yet far off. Brooding and lonely, wandering and questing in the silent passes of his own consciousness, he may perhaps be growing into a greater glory. Indubitably he has a genius for language, for the poetry of memorable dialogue, for deft character drawing. We treasure the singing charm of the "Emperor Jones," we relive the heroic wreckage of "All God's Chillun's Got Wings," and we cling valorously to the dark cabins of the "Glencairn," to the muted agony of "The Hairy Ape," to the tense passion of "Desire Under the Elms."

O'Neill has clutched at the heart of America. And in the twisting of our heart strings he has given to the world the tone of our universality. Into his composition have gone the pigments of many peoples; yet only America could have produced him.

Resonant and valorous, poetic and prodigal, with

the power of a new Young country and the knowledge of the Old, he is, indeed, the product of these fiery United States. He has raised our status among the nations. His plays are studied, produced, and admired in many lands.

He has placed us firmly on the dramatic map, destroying the allegation of our immaturity, and bringing our critics to a realization of our potential dramatic resources.

O'Neill is being closely followed by Sidney Howard. Recently "Ned McCobb's Daughter" and "The Silver Cord" have raised Mr. Howard to a newer and firmer place in the American theatre. He has advanced enormously in analysis since the days of "They Knew What They Wanted," and "The Silver Cord," with its ruthless divination of the selfish heart of a "possessive mother," is one of the strongest dramas of recent years.

Production, direction, staging, and the art of acting have advanced enormously in America in the last decade. We may not have a Max Reinhardt, but we have a still brilliant Belasco, and a score of capable younger men and women who are individual in their productions. George Abbot, Philip Dunning, Priestly Morrison, Rachel Crothers, Gilbert Miller, Lester Lonergan, Robert Milton, James Light, Ben Ami, Eva Le Gallienne, Richard Boles-

lavsky, Guthrie McClintic, Philip Moeller, Lee Simonson, Cleon Throckmorton, and Robert Edmond Jones know how to light, stage, and direct the American drama.

In the expenditure of money on productions, in the magnificence of theatres, in the sumptuous mounting of plays, America has no equal throughout the world today.

Our playhouses are open to the novelties of the world. In the theatrical season we house the Moscow Art Theatre, the Comédie Française, Pirandello and his players, the "Habima," English companies, Italian, Spanish, Mexican, Irish, Yiddish, and Austrian productions.

Our horizon is international and our audiences are catholic in their tastes. The theatre is part of our everyday life. Through its open doors stream a luring light which steals into our evenings and seduces us from our tasks. Our actors are household words. Our dinner parties are filled with theatrical discussions.

America is dramatic—the land of startling surprises, the land of the mannequin who marries a millionaire, of the coal miner who becomes a Midas.

We live and think dramatically. We welcome experiment in every form. We fly to any height. New York is congested with theatres, film houses,

burlesques, cabarets, night clubs. They are part of the great rushing life of a people who must have life painted vividly, who seldom pause to see the reflection of a water-lily in a quiet pond.

To us the pearl must be of great price before it is found to be of great value. We have almost forgotten to live simply, to take the baby carriage into the park and to feed the animals in the zoo.

Yet the young and ever-growing America cannot fail to become more dramatic. In its very furore, in the dash of its movements, in its dreams and aspirations it cannot fail to startle and amaze. A nation that can welcome any form of experiment in the theatre will some day produce drama which will cause the world to stand amazed.

America is still adolescent, with all the passion, the fury, the aching longings still unexpressed. She reaches crudely at the high points in the dramatic firmament. She experiments and at times blunders; but through this trial-and-error period she is destined to arrive at perfection.

XXIII: THE LITTLE THEATRE MOVEMENT

Tidal waves of monster film productions have put an end, perhaps forever, to the road business of Broadway plays. New York productions no longer go to Portland, Maine, or Portland, Oregon. Radios, films, cinemas of all sorts are dealing a death blow to the touring company—with the possible exception of "hits" that are given a week's run in the big cities, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, etc.

The first staggering reaction of this condition evidenced itself in an apathy which seemed likely to be long enduring and fatal. Residents in small towns grew resigned to the fact that if they wanted to see any plays they must go to New York for a protracted theatre-jag.

But the last few seasons have witnessed the amazing growth of a new force in the American theatre—a force not to be discounted. That force is the Little Theatre Movement, which, at this moment, is sweeping from Maine to California.

Two or three years ago David Belasco offered a "Little Theatre Cup" at a "Little Theatre Tournament" to be held every spring in New York

City. To this contest the most ambitious of the little theatre companies from all over the country send their players and their productions.

Many of these productions have reached planes of mature distinction. Irving Pichel out in California leads a group of skilled and trained actors—artists who have long since lost any trace of the amateur. Dallas, Texas, sends a prize winning team that produces plays like "The Delta Wife" with splendid skill.

"The Hudson Guild" group of workmen players prove that the postman, the typist, or the repressed white-collar slave, can conceal his talent for dramatic portraiture in the humdrum everyday existence.

The Little Theatre Movement is important and perhaps prophetic of strange, new conditions. The drama that is the mirror of our lives may best be expressed by those who live it. The village seamstress, whose vicarious existince is fraught with inhibitions, the typist whose sense of romance has gone destructively to work upon her "boss," the postman, the janitor, the bank clerk, who find their daily life a dull cage of endless and monotonous repressions—all of these may find that even intermittent acting will bring new zest into their lives.

The Little Theatre Movement may become

mighty. Potential stage directors, embryonic actors, neglected writers will undoubtedly come into the light of a new day.

And the maid, wife, or mother in far-off Coshocton who can never see an opening night on Broadway may come into her "birthright" by attending the "first nights" at the Little Theatre of her own home town.

Today's drama is the walking reflection of all our lives. Unperceived it creeps through half-opened doorways or steals miraculously through doors fast closed.

It is the unbidden microphone of half-formed emotions, new messages and new decisions.

When our drama with all the contributions from other lands, with all the internationalism which it needs to make it fertile, fecund, and provocative creeps slowly, steadily, into all our lives, little theatres will become great theatres.

And Daisy Mayme in Coshocton will find that she is not much different from her sister in Timbuctoo. Tony Lyle will find that she functions in Mayfair as well as on Park Avenue. The echo of Lazarus' Laugh will resound from the far corners of the earth. And the stodgy, blunt, but unearthly beauty of Marco Millions will prove no more valid in Gotham than in Timbuctoo.

Then American drama, whether in big or little theatres, in garage or barn or attic or the glorious golden palaces of Broadway, will come into its heritage as the lucky little rich girl of the ages. There will be nothing but poverty for her while she refuses to listen, to heed all those live, colorful international influences that arrive with every steamer, with every foreign company or "star." This land needs the color and the variety that is in the heart of every immigrant to store in the treasure house of the American theatre big or little of tomorrow.

XXIV: THE THEATRE GUILD

The Guild has traced a curiously deviating course from the early modest days of the Washington Square Players to the splendors of the new Guild Theatre on West Fifty-Second Street.

This course has been marked at times with an intense emphasis on plays, at others upon playhouses and most recently upon players.

The Guild today stands for the finest aggregation of actors in the country. Its permanent acting company contains perhaps more actors of unique talent than any other theatre organization in America.

Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontaine, Dudley Diggs, Margalo Gillmore, Henry Travers, Edward Robinson, Philip Leigh, Helen Westley, Laura Hope Crewes, and a score of visiting stars bring the Guild productions up to a plane of unparalleled artistry.

Yet the basic reason for the success of the Guild lies not in its players nor in its plays but in the esprit-de-corps, in the lasting quality of devotion which its Board of Directors have expressed for one another and for their common cause since their early bitter and enduring struggle.

Theresa Helburn, executive director and guiding

spirit; Helen Westley, veteran actress; Philip Moeller, gifted author and director; Lee Simonson, talented artist; Maurice Wertheim, astute business man; Lawrence Langner, lawyer and author—these form a coalition which inevitably insures success.

The history of the Guild is an important page in the annals of the American theatre. Today the Guild has an international reputation as being the foremost theatrical organization in the United States. Yet it has not "discovered" playwrights, American or otherwise, preferring rather to worship and produce the already established Shaw or Milne or Molnar or Werfel, and waiting to place its faith in O'Neill until many years after the little Provincetown down in MacDougall Street first brought his dramas to the full light of day.

In its progress the Guild has roamed far: From the early days when it gave brief performances of Benavente's "Bonds of Interest" and George Kaiser's "From Morn to Midnight," through years of experiment with Pirandello, Molnar, Sidney Howard, Franz Werfel, Toller, Milne, Galsworthy, and Shaw it has traveled to a stage of success that surpasses the dreams of its founders.

Coincidentally with O'Neill's brilliant satire of the Orient, "Marco Millions," the Guild has secured young Ramon Mamoulian. This gifted director who

seems to absorb atmosphere, color, the full values of a people, has by some unknown process been able to absorb the new O'Neill, the mystic and visionary, the man who writes modern satire by way of an ancient Oriental approach, the poet who, slipping back into the day before yesterday, brings Lazarus laughing from beyond the tomb. Mamoulian and O'Neill are a curiously adapted combination. The one, a highly sensitized artist who fascinates vast audiences by color and character sense; the other, a highly attuned author whose vision is without bounds.

The Guild's new policy of interchangeable plays at their own and other theatres implies the beginnings of repertory. The Guild's acting companies tour the country, the Guild's School of Acting progresses healthily, and the Guild's subscription list grows beyond all dreams.

The Guild, however, should combat endlessly the tendency to "commercialism." We realize that it must fight conditions on Broadway, and we find ourselves sighing often for its pristine sense of struggle and simple endeavor.

Yet it is difficult not to be proud of an institution which is ranked so highly the world over, an organization that serves beauty, that houses us in perfect comfort, that gives us superlative productions, and the last word in acting.

"MARCO MILLIONS" BY EUGENE O'NEILL

"PORGY" BY DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD

Our sigh at times is that so much splendor is not for the struggling playwright, that he must win his laurels elsewhere before he comes here for recognition, and we deplore the loss of early simplicity and ingenuousness.

XXV: THE AMERICAN LABORATORY THEATRE

For the first time in the life of the American theater the word "laboratory" takes its place in the dramatic vocabulary. No better word could have been chosen to designate the groping, experimental phase of the theatre away from the established toward the potential and the untested. Up on Fifty-Eighth Street the little Laboratory Theatre aims earnestly to train actors in plays that afford them full scope and vision.

One can do no better than to quote Richard Boleslavsky, founder and prime mover of the Laboratory spirit, who, coming to America with the Moscow Art Players, was prevailed upon to remain and form this young group of experimentalists. The purpose of the theatre is thus set forth by Mr. Boleslavsky:

"The aim of the theatre is after all to supply the best actors in the world either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical pastoral, tragical-historical, scene indivisible or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and liberty, these are the only men. Give that which Polonius suggests and

you will get all cultural, historical, and moral results set before the theatre."

Most of the emphasis at the American Laboratory Theatre is placed on acting, although stage settings are given just a shade less attention. Young artists in all departments are nurtured with careful judgment. There are experts in many subjects on the staff—Boleslavsky, director; Maria Ouspenskaya, instructor in the technique of acting; John Mason Brown, in the development of the drama; Professor Douglas Moore, in the appreciation of music; Michael Mordkin, in plastique and mimeo drama; and Professor William Tilly in problems of stage speech.

The American Laboratory Theatre which began so simply as a dramatic school now functions as a full-sized professional theatre some of whose plays have traveled to Broadway. Among its carefully selected repertory are: "Granite" by Clemence Dane, "At the Gate of the Kingdom" by Knut Hamsun, Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors," "The Straw Hat" by Labiche, "Dr. Knock" by Jules Romains, "The Sea-Woman's Cloak" by Amélie Rives, and "The Trumpet Shall Sound" by Thornton Wilder.

Its curriculum includes body training, voice and mind training, aesthetic dancing, theatre history, diction, and general cultural courses. Surely nobody

could accuse the American Laboratory Theatre of being one-tracked.

Since the highest emphasis is placed by this theatre upon acting, it is interesting to note what Richard Boleslavsky has to say on the art. Himself a capable actor and director, he has compiled a compendium which is interesting and timely. The following passage will present his attitude to the histrionic art:

"Even our good manners—which are pure theatre—do not, in the last analysis, come from governesses, tutors, books of etiquette, or dancing masters. They come rather from that logical sense of perfection which resides in every normal human being, and this longing for perfection may be said to be the true source of that acting power and theatricality which pervades our life. Sometimes this desire to idealize and to avoid things as they really are leads us to absurd lengths, as, for example, when we put ornaments on coffins and feathers and draperies on the hearses going to the cemetery.

"While it is true that the theatre is only a part of what may be termed the huge acting industry of the world, it is, at the same time, the field where the art of acting can best be analyzed. If the 'acting' of everyday life is the attempt to perfect reality, within the theatre you get the further attempt to perfect this first perfection. Then the art of acting is set

before you in its essence, and for that reason offers a better opportunity of analysis.

"There are many definitions of the art of acting, already thoroughly familiar. At the risk of being repetitious, I will quote a few of them. First there is the opinion of Fanny Kemble written in 1882. She declared that:

> " 'The art of acting has neither fixed rules, specific principles, indispensable rudiments nor fundamental laws; it has no basis in positive science, as music, painting, sculpture and architecture have; and differs from them all in that the mere appearance of spontaneity, which is an acknowledged assumption, is its chief merit.'

"Coquelin, on the other hand, following Diderot's paradox, says:

> " 'I am convinced that one can only be a great actor on condition of complete self-mastery and ability to express feelings which are not experienced, which may never be experienced, which from the very nature of things never can be experienced. And this is the reason that our trade is an art, and this is the cause of our ability to create.'

"Talma has his own opinion:

" 'Acting, like every other art, has a mechanism. No painter, however great his imaginative power, can succeed in pure ignorance of the technicalities of his art; and no actor can make much progress till he has mastered a certain mechanism which is within the scope of patient intelligence. Beyond that is the sphere in which a magnetic personality exercises a power of sympathy which is irresistible and indefinable. That is great acting; but though it is inborn, and cannot be taught, it can be brought forth only when the actor is master of the methods of his craft. He must remember, first, that every sentence expresses a new thought and therefore frequently demands a change of intonation; secondly that the thought precedes the word. (The actor should have the art of thinking before he speaks.) Of course there are passages in which thought and language are borne along by the stream of emotion, and completely intermingled. But more often it will be found that the most natural, the most seemingly accidental effects are obtained when the working of the mind is visible before the tongue supplies the words.'

"And finally I would take you back nearly two thousand years to Quintilian, who somewhere between the years 35 and 95 A.D. wrote:

"'The great secret . . . for moving the passions is to be moved ourselves; for the imitation grief, anger, indignation, will often be ridiculous if our words and countenances alone conform to the emotion, not our heart. Wherefore, when we wish to attain verisimilitude in emotion, let us put ourselves in the place of those who really suffer; and let our speech proceed from the very state of mind which we wish to induce in the judge. Will he grieve, who hears me declaim unmoved? Will he weep, who sees me dry-eyed? But how shall we be affected, our emotions not being at our command? This too I shall try to explain. What the Greeks call "paviaolas" we call "visiones"; whereby the images of things absent are so represented to the mind that we seem to see them with our eyes, and to have them present before us. Whoever shall have conceived these thoroughly will have complete power over his emotions. I have often seen histrions and actors, on laying aside their masks after some mournful scene, continue to shed tears. If, then, the mere pronouncing of another's words can thus beget unreal emotions, what should not we effect, who ought to think our own words, and to be moved on behalf of our clients . . . I have often been moved, not

only to tears, but to pallor and every symptom of grief.'

[One is tempted to add parenthetically at this point, Shakespeare's definition of acting, in his characterization of one of his fools, who after all were actors too. The definition is short and not without humor—"A Corruptor of Words"—that is all. What a marvel this Shakespeare was, to foresee a condition hundreds of years ahead and give such an excellent definition of 90 per cent of the average acting today!]

"I have chosen these contrasting opinions on the art of acting to bring out the four different schools which they represent. Miss Kemble represents the opinion that acting is nothing but inspiration, nothing but flashes of the mere appearance of spontaneity. I might term this the School of Inspiration. To Coquelin's followers acting is the 'ability to express that which never did happen'—in other words the ability to falsify. This might be called the School of Counterfeiters. To Talma acting is a mental process, the result of brain work, an exhibition of intelligence and mentality—a very honorable, but none too happy opinion, belonging to the School of the Scholars. Finally we come to the definition of Quintilian, which begins 'for moving the passions is to be

moved ourselves.' This we may call, with William Archer, the School of Emotionalists.

"This last definition precipitates us at once into a controversy that has raged intermittently from before the days of Quintilian up to the present time. I do not intend to bore you with a dreary catalogue of the arguments and quarrels brought about by the discussion of the questions, 'Should you feel what you act or should you not?' 'Is it easier to move the audience when you actually feel on the stage or when you only pretend or perform the feeling?' But having laid all the various points of view before you, it may be profitable to consider them a little more at length—particularly the classic debate between the Emotionalists and the Anti-Emotionalists.

"The followers of both sides can bring you, to support their contentions, a mass of evidence, all of which is witty enough and true enough to leave the decision in the air. Take, for instance, the old story about the French actor Quinault Dufresne, who was required in a highly emotional scene, where his cheeks were bedewed with tears, to utter an aside in a low tone. It is related that on one occasion, some one in the pit called out to him at this moment 'Plus haut' (Louder) and that with a second's hesitation the actor shout back 'Et vous, Messieurs, plus bas' (Softer). Your Anti-Emotionalists will maintain

that it would be impossible for a man who was really feeling to the point of shedding tears, to answer an interruption of this kind as promptly and so to the point. He must, they say, have been merely pretending to feel, while his mind was actually free and untrammeled by emotions. It is, however, quite as easy to argue for the other side that only because the actor was in a state of genuine and significant emotion that had been rudely interrupted could he summon the requisite courage and strength so boldly and unhesitatingly to defend himself. There is another story which concerns Lekain. Of him it is told that once in the midst of an exceedingly tragic scene, where, as the son of a murdered mother, he entered her tomb with a raving monologue, he noticed a valuable diamond, dropped by the leading actress, lying on the floor before him. Without interrupting his lamentations, he quietly pushed the diamond toward the wings with his foot. Anti-Emotionalists insist that a man capable of such presence of mind could not be truly feeling his tragic emotions. To be genuinely absorbed in grief and quietly to save a diamond at the same time is to them altogether incomprehensible. The Emotionalists counter with the the assertion that if such a situation were duplicated in real life, it might be quite instinctive for a dis-

traught son to bend down and slip the diamond into his pocket.

"Personally I admire Joseph Jefferson's statement, 'For my part, I like to have the heart warm and the head cool,' which seems to come rather close to the crux of the problem. One might term the followers of this point of view the School of Emotion Makers or creators. It is only comparatively recently, however, that the new psychology and psycho-analysis have made such a thought practical.

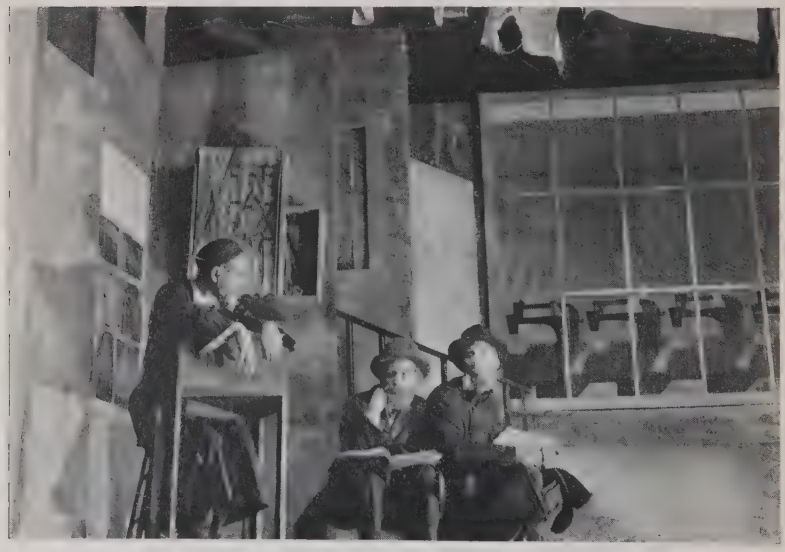
"It is obvious that no actor, no matter how endowed, can enter absolutely into the character of, let us say, Lady Macbeth, Othello, or Hamlet. If such a thing could be done, the unfortunate actor would be able to play the part but once and then would be a candidate for the mad-house. As a matter of fact, I have actually known a case similar to this. There was once a very talented member of the Moscow Art Theatre, who dreamed all his life of playing the part of one of the Brothers Karamazov. When he finally had the opportunity to do this, he played for a few weeks and then was taken to the insane asylum. He recovered two years later, but had completely lost the power to appear on the stage and perform. Some of us who were youngsters at the time took him to our hearts and helped him to start again from the very beginning. We arranged performances where

he, like the veriest novice, trembling and perspiring with nervousness, played small parts before an audience of one, two, three and four, gradually working up to a full house. I am proud to say that our group of young actors actually cured him and brought him back to the stage. When the Moscow Art Theatre visited the United States two years ago, this actor was with them and played several parts. For me, however, his experience is adequate proof of the impossibility of 100 per cent pure emotionalism on the stage."

Richard Boleslavsky has pondered on the art of acting and without hesitation we declare him a leader in the field!

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

"THE PRISONER" BY EMIL BERNHARD



"THE CENTURIES" BY EM JO BASSHE

XXVI: THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYHOUSE AND THE NEW PLAYWRIGHT'S THEATRE

One might pertinently ask—"When does an experimental theatre cease to be experimental?" And the reply might come glibly—"When it puts the experiment across!"

If such be the case, then the little Provincetown has ceased to be "experimental." Yet we should deplore such a condition. For the earnest group down in MacDougall Street, in that cross-section of New York dubbed, patronizingly, "The Village"—continues, thank a gracious Heaven, to experiment.

The daring souls who courageously bore O'Neill to fruition and Susan Glaspell and Robert Edward Jones and Cleon Throckmorton, James Light and Paul Green and a dozen or so other full-sized 'stars' in the acting, writing and producing world—need not be ashamed of its experiment.

Katherine Cornell, Helen Gahagan, Walter Abel, Paul Robeson, Frank Wilson, Robert Keith, John Gielgud—Hilda Vaughan—Mordecai Gorelik, Em Jo Basshe—Henry Alsberg, Eleanor Fitzgerald—

need not be ashamed of their Provincetown paternity—nor the Provincetown of them!

The idea of experimenting with 'new forces' in writing, acting, producing, lighting, and of testing out the validity of these forces is not new in Europe. Lügne-Poes does it in Paris, as does Jacques Copeau. The "Workmen's Theatre" does it in Berlin—"The Everyman" and the "Q" Theatres in London. The "Everyman" out in Hampstead—perhaps approaches more closely to the Provincetown than any of the others. Many new plays have been nursed into existence out at the "Everyman"—an existence which has sometimes endured for months in the West End of London. The Strindberg cult was born at the "Everyman," as was the Tchekov, the Ibsen and the Masefield.

Down at the Provincetown O'Neill was encouraged to write—and then to write some more. From his early one-act play days when "S. S. Glencairn" and "Different" gave golden promise which was fulfilled in "The Emperor Jones," "The Hairy Ape," "Desire Under the Elms," "All God's Chillun's Got Wings," and "The Straw"! The Provincetown produced O'Neill's first efforts. It may produce his latest—"Lazarus Laughed." It has coddled and wooed and protected the man who spells mystic genius in the American theatre of today. If

the little Provincetown had done nothing beyond bearing the fecund O'Neill, it would have justified the reason for its being.

But it has done more. Much more. It has nurtured valuable stage artistry. Robert Edward Jones who runs the gamut of production in the chill of "Hamlet's" drear backgrounds—the Hopkins' production for Barrymore—to the horror filled bare sets in the superstition ridden "Emperor Jones" in MacDougall Alley.

Jones remains the loving "amateur" in stage land. He toys caressingly with sunny porticoes in "Paris Bound" and departs unregretfully for the stern simplicity of the American Opera Company's first production of "Faust." This is the Jones that the Provincetown reared. The Jones who, after browsing in the "Freie Bühne" of Berlin and the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow, returned with enough Continental stagecraft to cut a house in half—and allow us to peer into every corner of that house in "Desire Under the Elms."

Jones remains curiously American even with his "fifty per cent" Continental backgrounds. He browses and probes and startles. He is uniquely simple, and gloriously romantic. He plays with color and with figures thrown starkly against a shadowed curtain of Night. His is an art of pau-

city, of painful economy, of a long trail of wanderings. Wanderings lit by the fuse of his plaintive suggestions.

Throckmorton builds sets for Jones and for himself, equally simple and suggestive. Yet Throckmorton does not depart far enough from a Provincetown and Puritan rigidity to run riot in color or passion of form.

The Provincetown has had a curiously gradated struggle. Serving an ideal of producing plays for the value of their novelty, either in theme or form of writing, the little group has touched high planes of exaltation and corresponding depths of despondency. Needing a permanent subsidy—which it does *not* get—it spends much of its precious energy in "cadging for money." Yet strangely enough it has won Pulitzer Prizes which should have brought enduring fortune and has sent plays Broadway-ward which should forever have dispelled its financial difficulties.

The personnel of the Provincetown has varied from its early days when George Cram Cook, Susan Glaspell, Eugene O'Neill and Kenneth MacGowan guided its destinies. Today Cook lies buried in Greece, Susan Glaspell pursues the muse alone, MacGowan has departed to larger fields and O'Neill can give but intermittent attention to the little house

which he truly loves. So that the destinies of the Provincetown are today controlled by the devoted Eleanor Fitzgerald, James Light, Henry Alsberg, Cleon Throckmorton and Howard McGee.

This is the group who found Paul Green and brought his "Abraham's Bosom" up to the Pulitzer Prize. This is the group who have produced the greatest negro drama of our modern times. And in Paul Green—erstwhile worker in the fields of North Carolina—today Professor of Philosophy in the University of North Carolina, they have fostered a talent which runs little short of genius. Green lowers his ear to Mother Earth—to her children. He hears their valid heartbeats, be they black or white. He walks with God in the fields—and losing him—does not hesitate to blaspheme until finding him again, he immortalizes the "Field God" of man's bitterest imaginings.

The Provincetown may be swept to permanent glory with the production of "Lazarus Laughed." They own the latest word of America's supreme dramatist. It is a play which demands glorified production. A play which reaches to the stars and calls upon Man's laughter and tears. A vision of the Beyond—and a bringing of it back into life. "There is no death but fear!" "We must laugh not at, but with, life." If the little Provincetown can

tear a bit out of that eternal blue and bring it down to all of us theatre will cease to be theatre and merge simply into Life.

A neighbor, but not a brother to the Provincetown, is "The New Playwright's Theatre" in Grove Street. It consists of a daring group of young experimentalists who have wandered from Fifty-Second Street—where last year they produced "Earth," another negro play by Em Jo Basshe, and "The Moon is a Gong" by John Dos Passos.

The New Playwrights are experimenting not for Broadway but for themselves, with theme and form, light and staging, music, background, color. They are honest, earnest, fearless, and without self-consciousness, or bravura. They venture into dark quicksands, grounded in errors and peculiarly muddled themes. And they pull out of the quicksands with the skill and courage of pioneers.

They are growing and are not afraid of growing pains. The nature of their experiments implies that there should be a desire for understanding on the part of New York's dramatic critics—an understanding which seldom exists. All growth is painful; yet the *aim* of "growing" is worthy enough—that there should be some *effort* at critical comprehension. These men are experimenting with all form. They want to find the truth in drama and the drama in

truth. They want to put life on the stage as it is lived—not as it is mirrored. If they are, at times, hectic, it is with the very valid fever of their purpose. If they grow muddled, it is because they are eager and sensitive and life itself often proves too much for them.

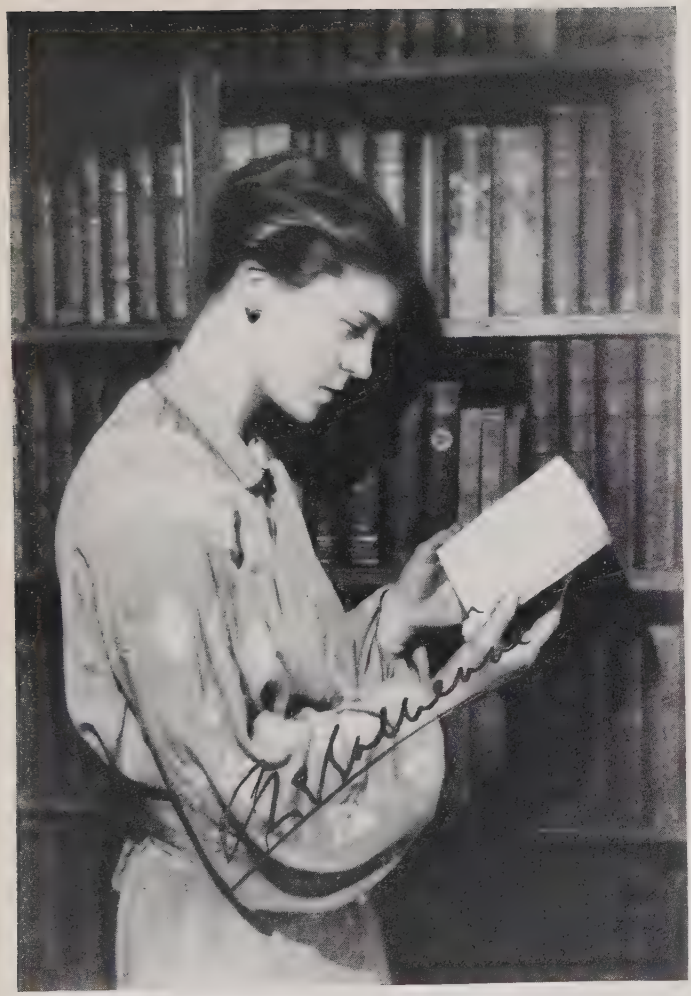
This group of growers is composed of John Howard Lawson, John Dos Passos, Michael Gold and Em Jo Basshe. They function interchangeably in all capacities in the theatre. Basshe has painted a curiously poignant section of East Side life in "The Centuries." He plunges into the morass of hectic living "East of Third"—with too little correlation of the purpose for that living. Yet with color and pulse and heart. Lawson wandered over the Earth with his "International," and caught the tempo of revolutionary man—everywhere. Passos will give us "The Hoboken Blues," and Michael Gold—"Fiesta." These struggles have caught the interest of the socialist masses. Rebellion runs riot. Whether it can be harnessed to lucidity and art and power remains to be seen. But the New Playwrights are earnest, and incorruptible! All success to their aim and purpose! They at least are America in all her youth and questioning. They at least do not flinch at growing—and who knows, some day—may reach up to the stars?

XXVII: THE CIVIC REPERTORY THEATRE

It has remained for a young and gifted idealist to take the most important step toward the establishment of repertory in the United States. Eva Le Gallienne, so lately known to Broadway for her magnetism in "Liliom," for her art in "The Swan," for her unique productions of Ibsen, has deserted the commercialized stage for artistic repertory down on Fourteenth Street.

In the American theatre repertory has been attempted at intervals from various angles. Walter Hampden does it, at the Hampden Theatre—after a fashion. But his repertory is a matter of alternation of two or three successes—"Caponsacchi," "An Enemy of the People," "Hamlet"—which he has already established in a long "run." Nor is his theatre conducted on the idea of an almost daily change of play and players, nor on the principle, which distinguishes Miss Le Gallienne alone, of aiming to give great plays for small admission prices.

Civic repertory, as Miss Le Gallienne and her able co-artists conduct it, is founded on the basis of a "theatre of the people, by the people, and for the



EVA LE GALLIENNE

Founder of the Civic Repertory Theatre

"CRADLE SONG" BY MARTINEZ SIERRA

people." The ideal of the Civic Repertory Theatre has been to give in the best possible production a variety of good plays—tragedy, comedy, satire—so that the young student in the gallery is as much catered to as the lady from Park Avenue far below.

Miss Le Gallienne's plays are selected from the world's classics: Goldoni's comedy of manners, "La Locandiera"; Herman Heyermans' great social drama, "The Good Hope"; Tchekov's drama of pathos, "The Three Sisters"; Sierra's charming "Cradle Song"; Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"; Benavente's symbolistic "Saturday Night"; and Ibsen's "The Master-Builder" and "John Gabriel Borkman."

Included in the repertory are Susan Glaspell's "Inheritors,"' Gustav Wied's fantastic satire "2×2=5," and Walter Ferris' "The First Stone."

To this rich and colorful roster Miss La Gallienne plans to add Jean Jacques Besnard's "L'Invitation au Voyage"—and other plays during the coming season. From even a casual survey one may perceive the internationalism of her vision and the basic knowledge which causes her to be the fertile leader of such a repertory company.

Her company includes strikingly gifted actors. Egon Brecher, well able to bear the burden of a play at any time, sturdy and individualistic, powerful and

authoritative in his art, Josephine Hutchinson, hauntingly spiritual and fragrant, Beatrice de Neergard, Sayre Crawley, Alma Kruger, and a score more of gifted, earnest artists, make every production down at the old Fourteenth Street Theatre a joy to mind and senses.

The amazing Miss Le Gallienne dawns now upon the dramatic horizon as a uniquely gifted director in addition to being an actress of rare power and charm. Born of Danish and English parentage, the quality of her heritage is undoubtedly evidenced in her art. Quiet, impressive, authoritative, she possesses a potent power of persuasion. Those around her work with intense joy and zeal; while "Each in his separate star acts the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are."

And the god or goddess seems earnestly intent upon giving to the American public (that vast army of theatre-goers who cannot pay Broadway's exorbitant prices) good theatre at small prices.

Eva Le Gallienne has an intuitive understanding of the best in drama. Widely read and traveled, steeped in a knowledge of the history of the theatre, cosmopolitan, imbued with an exalted civic idealism, this young actress, directress, and manageress seems destined to go far on the road to dramatic glory.

Her dream is of many Civic Repertory Theatres in

many cities everywhere. And her dream is founded, not on visions of personal aggrandizement, but on the needs of the masses.

This dream needs the interest and the subsidy of cities, artists, and public, so that the vision of one unselfish dreamer may become a reality throughout the land.

XVIII: THEATRES

One would like to arrange the theatres of the world in an exhibition in which their characteristics might be contrasted. This being impossible, we must be content with the next best thing—to review the impressions each has left on us.

If we were forced to make a single statement, a comparison, we should say that Germany and Austria lead the world in the magnificence of their theatre buildings. And in saying this, we do not forget the imposing Opera House in Paris, nor Joseph Urban's latest achievement in the Ziegfeld Theatre, New York. Yet the great Burg Theatre in Vienna came into being three decades ago. It is a composite of Theatre and Opera House. Its regal staircase still recalls the era of great royal pomp.

Germany gives land and subsidies to her theatres. It constructs magnificent marble foyers, big orchestra loges, comfortable seats, low balconies, no galleries, deep stages, broad pits. It has wide side-aisles, wide promenoirs, and still wider buffets where appetizing food is continuously served to make the evening one of complete comfort.

Germany is lavish in her theatres with tapestries,

marbles, statues, paintings. Her foyers are decorated like palaces, lined with priceless rugs. In Berlin there is at least one new theatre whose walls are paneled entirely in rosewood inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Germany has a complete lighting apparatus where the latest achievements in lighting can be effectively demonstrated. It has deep wings for the storage of scenery and fine, spacious dressing rooms. In the newer theatres the comfort of the actor is carefully catered to, and in "The Comedie Theatre," one of Reinhardt's three playhouses in Berlin, the star's dressing room resembles that of Marie Antoinette's in the Petit Trianon.

Outside the theatres in Germany there are broad walks or beautiful gardens. In the intervals of the play, the audience strolls, chats, or dines. Indoors or out, there is always a thought to "dining." At the magnificent "Prinz Regenten Theatre" in Munich an entire park surrounds the theatre, where the audience may stroll happily in the intermissions of Drama or Opera.

Munich has the famous Residenz Theatre. In the heart of the most populated district of the city an entire block is dedicated to three playhouses in one. The building is constructed on the old Roman pattern around a central court in which fountains play.

Rows of columns form a colonnade, and in the wide aisles, both inside and out, a multitude of people can lose themselves.

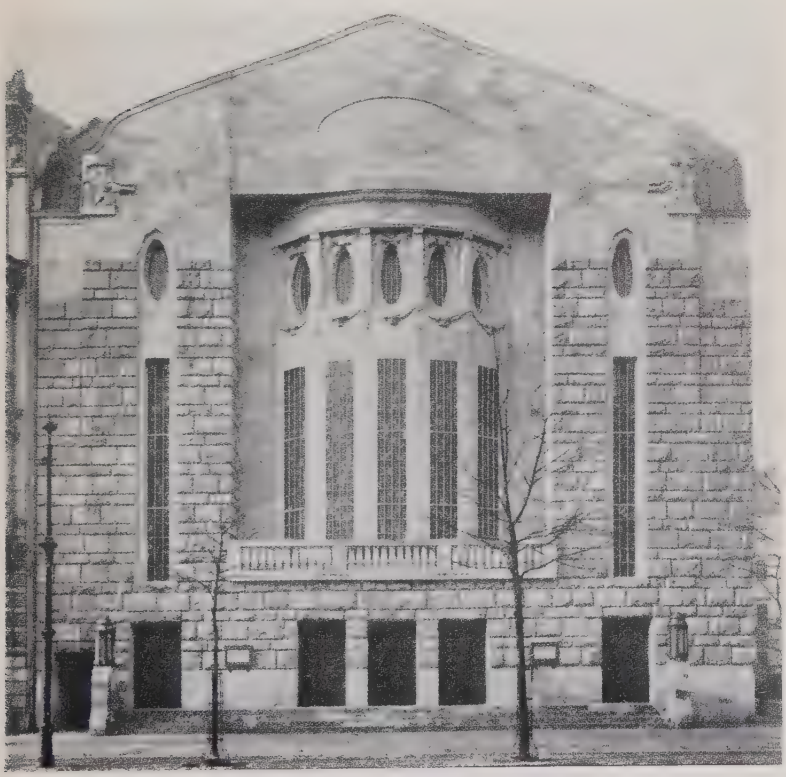
Every city of any importance in Germany has its Stadt-Theatre. Little Wiesbaden can give operas, concerts, and dramas. Beautiful Dresden has a superb opera house. Frankfort has its opera and its Stadt-Theatre with regal approach. Berlin has innumerable fine theatres and a great opera house. Munich also has many splendid theatres and opera houses. And little Salzburg has dedicated itself to the dramatic muse.

Germany loves its playhouses and tends them with loving care. She gives them courtyards, adorns them with trees and with flowering window-boxes. Her affection evidences itself in never-ending cleanliness.

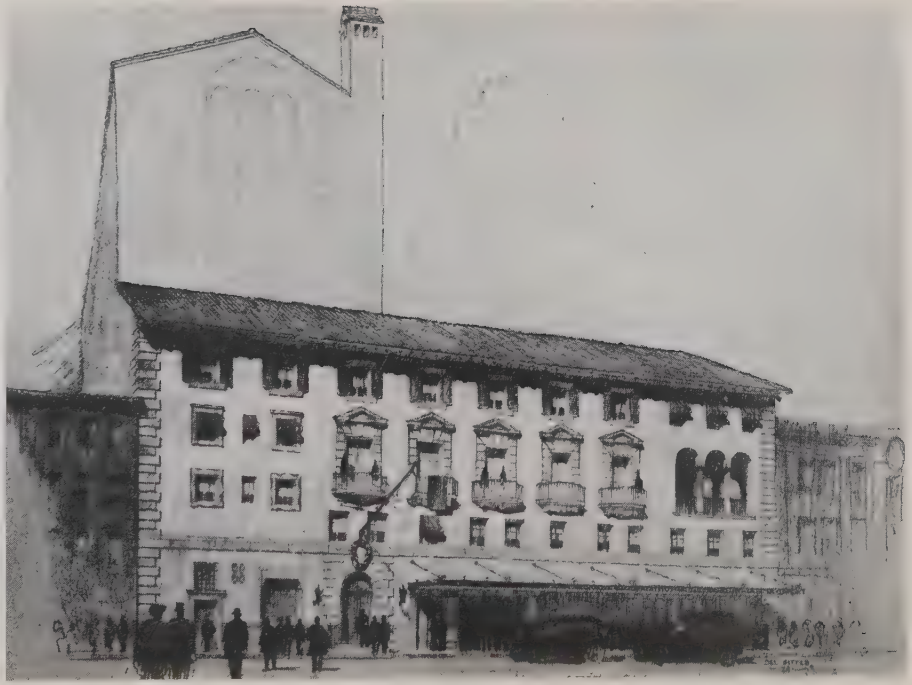
Germany possesses a reverence for its playhouses. Once built, they are not soon destroyed. Strangely enough, even her older theatres are comfortable and handsome. Here there are no underground passages where, as in England, one murmurs audible prayers for safe arrival. Here are no narrow seats to detract fom one's enjoyment of the play.

In France the theatres are smaller, less magnificent. Leaving aside the mammoth Comédie Française and the Opera House, there are no extrava-

NEUE FREIE VOLKSBÜHNE, BERLIN



THEATER IN DER KÖNIGGRÄTZER STRASSE, BERLIN



THE GUILD THEATRE, NEW YORK

gantly large structures. The Opera House in Paris, like the Burg Theatre in Vienna, occupies an entire city square. Its beauty has never been surpassed. Wide entrances guarded by beautiful statues to the Muses, broad aisles covered with thick velvet carpets, a wide promenoir and richly curtained loges, spell the last word in beauty. Magnificent paintings, tapestries, heavy crystal chandeliers, thick draperies, make the Paris Opera House one of the greatest theatres in the world.

Otherwise the smaller theatres, like the new "Edouard VII" and the old "Gymnase," vary in beauty and comfort. France, too, respects her theatre buildings and does not easily destroy them. The "Comédie" may have become unwieldy and difficult to handle, but it will remain until the Building Commission condemns it—if such a thing ever occurs in Paris. The "Gymnase" is undoubtedly old, draughty, and uncomfortable, but its dramatic history is fraught with memories of the divine Sarah, the adored Lucien Guitry, and some of the greatest actors in French history. The "Gymnase" will not readily be destroyed!

There are some exquisite new Boulevard theatres —smaller than those in Germany and more artistic. The "Champs-Elysées," the miniature "Marigny,"

the "Theatre L'Avenue," and the tiny "Vieux Colombier" attest the art and skill of France.

In no part of the world are the theatres as uncomfortable as in England. Down long, narrow, underground passages one's confused way is sought, until, near despair, one finally arrives at the stalls. The aisles are narrow, and the seats narrower; the pit is crowded and encroaches on the stalls; the high galleries give one a sense of keen discomfort. The "Old Criterion" cries aloud for destruction. The "Vaudeville," "The Prince of Wales," the "Aldwich," and a few of the ancient theatres could well be replaced by modern buildings.

Yet London can boast of a few new and good structures. The "Ambassador," the "St. Martin," the "Savoy," the "Strand," the "New," the "Scala"—all are attractive and well built. Nowhere in the British Isles, however, are there playhouses which can compare with those on the Continent.

In Spain is the exquisite Teatro Madrid, richly furnished, securely built. In Rome is the Teatro Roma and a few other beautifully built houses. In far off Christiania is the handsome "Ibsen Theatre," and in Cairo the lovely "Semiramis" and the "New Rameses."

Brussels can boast the beautiful "Theatre Flamande," and Holland—the complete little "Odeon."

Moscow has the great "Moscow Art Theatre" and the unique "Kamerny." Buda Pesth has the lavish "Theatre Czech," and Vienna, the fine little "Raimund Theatre."

New York, the new drama center of the world, has all sorts and grades of theatres—from the imposing and operatic "Century," on Central Park West, the magnificent new "Ziegfeld," and the handsome Guild Theatre, to the miniature "Provincetown," the barn-like "Civic Repertory" on Fourteenth Street, the struggling "Triangle."

New York theatres have no large foyers and promenades. Scattered throughout the country are fine playhouses—in Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, and in far-off San Francisco.

Yet the playhouses in America have not the tavern accompaniments of many European theatres. We do not eat in them nor stroll there for hours, reading newspapers or periodicals. Here we are not forced to buy our programs, our drinks, or pay to be shown to our seats, but perhaps this is all balanced in Europe by the lower prices paid for theatre-tickets.

America has said the last word in Film Houses. There is nothing to rival or surpass them. Berlin may have her "Ufa" and her "Gloria Palast," beautiful new cinemas; London may boast her "Tivoli" and her "Capitol"; France her "Aubert" and her

"Pathé Frères"; but nowhere in the world is to be found a "Paramount," a "Roxy," or a "Capitol."

These Film Palaces beggar description. Vast organ lofts, magnificent promenades, sunken orchestras, and movable platform stages. Rest rooms where Marie Antoinette could have fallen asleep and, awaking, found herself in her "Trianon." Children's playrooms, like palatial nurseries, and objets d'art gathered from European palaces.

One can conceive no enhancement of the splendor of these houses. But one can wish that the films themselves may come to equal the perfection of their dwelling places.

XXIX: STAGING

The staging of plays or, as it is called in England, the "Settings" of plays, varies as much as the natural backgrounds of countries differ from each other. Staging today is symbolic of temperament. The cool white pillars of Gordon Craig are as far removed from the hectic backdrops of Leon Balkst, as England is removed from Russia.

So few of us reflect upon the art of the producer. The quality that causes him either to obtrude his sets, with all the fervor of Willy Pogany, or the sense of proportion which like Puvis de Chavannes decrees that background shall always remain simply background.

The value of "sets" in the theatre should always be the value that enhances but does not obtrude. An eminent stage director once remarked: "The most beautiful set in the world is absorbed by the audience in the first five minutes after the rise of the curtain, and drops after that into background." The perfect set should, in no way, interfere with the action of the play; but should frame, enfold, enclose it, so naturally, that it would seem always to have been the

logical framework for the action. Any "set" which insists upon attracting attention to itself is, undoubtedly, a failure.

Staging, since the early days of Shakespearean simplicity, has advanced by leaps and bounds to a place of undisputable importance. Stage "sets" today vary from the exquisite interiors of Norman Bel-Geddes, in New York, to the sparse suggestiveness of Karl Heinz Martin, in Vienna, and to the almost painfully bare "flys" of the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow.

Stage artists run the whole gamut of emotions. Winthrop Ames clothes his revivals of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas with the lacy framework of picture plays, as does Sacha Guitry in Paris, while Lügne-Poe chooses rather the stern rigidity of Moscow or the sparseness of Antoine in the early days of the "Théâtre Libre." Gémier wanders from the hectic color and outline of the desert against which he throws Lenormand's "Simoun," to a veritable mirage of color in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" or "Le Marchand de Venise"; Gaston Baty implies, with the sparseness of Robert Edmond Jones, the denuded soul-life of the pitiable "Maya."

Scenic artists vary incalculably. Cleon Throckmorton dresses O'Neill in the simple accents of Provincetown, while Ramon Mamoulian from far-

off Hungary gives "Marco Millions" attired with conscious beauty.

Many stage designers have graduated into directing. It would seem plausible that the art that can picture can also interpret. Lee Simonson has made some excellent productions as have Robert Edmond Jones and Woodman Thompson. Benavente and Pirandello frequently design stage sets coincidentally with producing plays and Ernst Töller proves, in far-off Austria, that one mind may write, direct, and set the stage.

The last decade has been rife with warring theories on stage production. Secessionist artists like Picasso have wandered into the theatre to make the sets for the Russian Ballet. One finds strange theories at work in Moscow, and in Berlin, on the Reinhardt stages, where "Periphery" is set in a jumbled mass of futuristic backgrounds. In Vienna, "The Red Death" of Franz Czokor is set to a strange tune of futuristic moods—while in France, Jacques Copeau presents Shakespeare or "Sumurun" thrown against a background of luminous line!

There are so many more values in the art of stage settings than are ordinarily realized, that one may well ponder on just how great an influence these sets have upon audiences. The art of setting the stage has attracted some very unusual talents. Gordon

Craig, the gifted son of Ellen Terry, an outstanding authority on the subject, who, many years ago, seceding from the ranks of English designers to find inspiration in the East, has recently given his views in print on the theme. In a letter to W. A. Darlington published in the dramatic column of the London "Daily Telegraph," Craig writes:

"I think I am right in saying that the theatre men of the day (or are they only of the hour?) are gradually coming to look on settings not so much as backgrounds, but as a second troupe of silent actors. A scene to them is a place alive, and if alive it must say something, somehow mingling its silent talk with the rest of the play or goings on. Not calling attention to itself, but calling extra attention to the beings in the place and their doings and thoughts and feelings, and hinting perhaps at things which no amount of speeches can convey. This perhaps does not occur to every critic, this inability of speech to convey all."

"But is this at all like life?"

"Well, isn't it? I was last month in Weimar and visited the house where Goethe once lived. He was not there, yet if his room didn't testify to his having been there (it seemed only half an hour ago), then I was merely in a sentimental state and the tables, chairs, windows, size of room, floor boards, shelves, visitors' cards on a string, books, blotting pad, and the

doors into his bed-room, were not actually alive as I felt them to be."

"The House of Commons empty of its Statesmen and silent, is it nothing? Is it only background? A cathedral—empty, only you and I perhaps there to see it, but is it merely background? Is the high altar a background, the cross itself a bit of background, the eighty or ninety things which strike us and perhaps move us, only background?"

"And those so-called backgrounds in the pictures by some of the great masters; I recall several in the National Gallery—there is one by Piero della Francesca (unfinished)—'The Nativity.' He seemed to work his foreground figures and so-called 'background' as though they were one and indivisible."

"That's odd and worth considering. And why, in his other picture in the 'National Gallery'—'The Baptism of Christ'—why does that smallish figure of a man pulling a shirt over his head attract our attention? Is that right—Doesn't it detract from the central figure of Christus? And the trees, why are they painted with such care—as if counted? Will not a rather ignorant public be in danger of having its attention drawn to these beautiful leaves and branches—and the landscape and the sky with its clouds? If you'll look at all these points, you'll see they all speak, not intending to distract from any

central idea, but running that risk if a public is a half-grown up, half-baked bit of a fool.

"In the same gallery we have paintings even more dramatic. May a painting be so called 'dramatic'? If so, may a drama not be so called 'pictorial'? Why not? After all quarrelings are over, why not? The Italians who had these things painted have never raised any objections to their possessing a dramatic sense.

"It is only a group in the North that grows fastidious and fussy. And Italians, so far as we can find out, have never raised any cry against their opera and drama being too 'scenical,' the more the merrier, they felt. It is a bad business for us to have to suppose our northern publics are pudding-heads. I won't admit they are, just as, though I've seen publics which are not so easily led away, not so soon distracted."

Mr. Craig continues:

"If, during the first hearing of a play, I find myself reflecting that the designer has done his work well, I know that the play itself has ceased to hold me. Accordingly, after a first visit to a play which has moved me, the highest tribute that I am in a position to pay to the designer is a negative one, that his work supplied a background to the play which did not jar on me. Settings which call attention to

themselves, and distract attention from the play, are bad. Good settings attune my mood to the mood of the play, and then sink out of my consciousness.

"If I had to make an attempt to appraise their merit in any detail—I should have to pay a second visit to the theatre for that especial purpose."

In contrast to Mr. Craig, Mr. Granville Barker has this to say about stage sets:

"As we, when a play has no hold on us, may fall to thinking about the scenery, so to a Globe audience, unmoved, might be an obvious bare stage. But *are* we conscious of the scenery behind the actor when the play really moves us? If we *are*, there is something very wrong with the scenery—which should know its place as background. The audience was not so conscious of curtain and balcony when Burbage played Hamlet to them. They were conscious of Hamlet. That conventional background faded as does our painted illusion."

Naturally the difference between static art, such as Mr. Craig refers to in the National Gallery and "Stage Settings" is that the former *is* static, and the latter evanescent, movable; a part of the living, lyric quality of drama—opera-story!

Which, in the last analysis, brings us to the conclusion that stage settings, to approach perfection *must* of necessity be subjugated to drama. Their

part is none the more inferior because they must cater to, and feed, the theme!

Nor are they less valuable if they sink perfectly into proper harmony *with* the theme! It is only when they discard this sense of harmony and ride out into foregrounds of play and player's territory that we are painfully conscious *how* much they have failed.

A *poor* play has never been swept to permanent success by glorious stage-settings. But great plays become greater, when supported by the art of a designer who knows why and what he paints.

So we long for great drama to occupy Bel-Geddes permanently, and we hope for futurist and secessionist to settle into some more valid exposition of their art!

There is one modern theatre, where settings become intriguingly interesting for themselves, at least. And that is the Constructivist Theatre in Russia. In it, the vivid clash of color, the rhythmic beat of voices, the sharply patterned movements fade away as the walls of a room sometimes fade. Lights are up on actor or audience, curtain disappears and stage emerges; not the tiny usual box behind which the real theatre is played out; but a free, high stage, stripped up to the running gears; a clean sweep of stage extending into the audience. Down the steps,

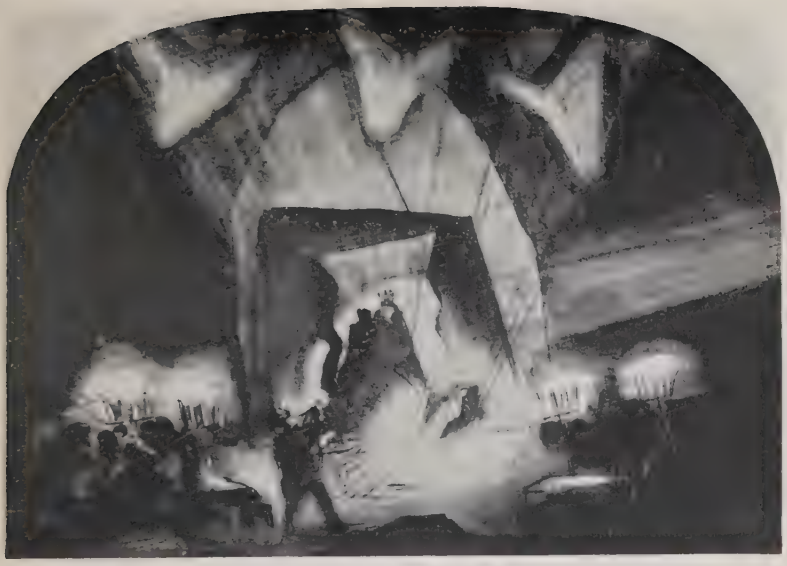
up the aisle; a stage, undecorated, unset save for those elements of reality, seesaws, swings, ladders—on which the rhythm of the play can best be expressed. The play becomes in construction, a ball to be tossed back and forth. For actors, according to this new Constructivist Theatre, must cease to be actors according to the terms of Realism or Expressionism. They must remain actors as the sublime clowns of the past were actors. The stage of these super-actor acrobats must no longer be a painted fake, but merely a space for actors—so constructed with elements of reality that they can best create the spirit of the play, work or love as the case may be. The actors, like the stage, are devoid of ornament. They wear dark work suits and skull caps. They are undifferentiated save for a girl's scarlet kerchief. Yet behold a contradiction! The characters, like the stage, emerge sharp and clear. The actors have lost the whole world of costuming and gained their own souls.

A father leaps down the steps looking into the lighted audience and cries, "Whom do I see?" And up the aisle to meet him comes the reluctant lover. He might be any one of us; he comes from us and takes us with him. Now on to upper stage—now on to lower—where action whirls and eddies about the audience. To us he confides his fears and on

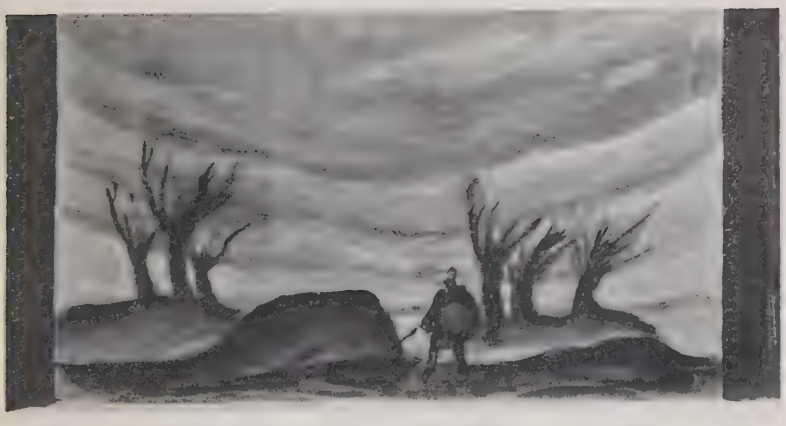
us he leans for support. The audience accepts realism, grows restless under expressionism, but enters completely and uproariously into constructivism, which, in its experiments proves to be completely in the rhythm of our time. It is of the age of sky-scraper, radio, air-plane, and it has freedom, boldness, sweep, crude power. It throws away æsthetics and discards decadence—completely!

What a contrast to the art of painters who are now *plunging* into the theatre—is this bare constructivist theory. Benois, Bakst, Derain, Picasso and Matisse are concerning themselves passionately to prove that we need color, light, scenery!

Yet the "Naturalists" (as they sometimes call themselves) concern themselves with Movie, Ballet, Pageant, Drama—and the Circus, and insist that they enter into the Economics as well as the Pictorial end of the theatre. Theories differ and clash furiously. Each has his own philosophy. Who can prophesy the end?



By Robert Edmond Jones



By Ernst Stern

TWO SETTINGS FOR "MACBETH"

JANE COWL

LYNN FONTANNE

PAULINE LORD

XXX: AUDIENCES

Audiences are barometers of national temperament quite as much as actors are symbols of national psychology. From the stoical silence of Norway to the fervid intensity of Egypt is a long journey—yet the audiences in these and other countries are more widely separated than mere mileage might indicate.

Audiences have as many distinctive characteristics as individuals. If one were to select the ideal audience one would undoubtedly choose the Norwegian. Ideal from the spectator's point of view; though their impassivity may be discouraging from the other side of the foot-lights. In Norway there is not much applause; neither is there an incessant munching of "sweets" and a crackling of the paper around the chocolate box, nor giggling, nor chitter-chatter. There may not be violent applause, but neither is there audible criticism of play and actors.

Holland and Belgium are like Norway in the universally quiet skepticism of their audiences. One perceives a brooding criticism in Holland underneath the quiet poise—a sense of turgid drama in life, a love of the morose, the violent, the passionate. Yet enthusiasm, as in Norway, is never vociferous. A

low rumble, like a series of smothered exclamations, is the nearest approach to applause. Holland differs from Belgium in its greater stoicism and placidity. Belgium, with a tinge of France, is more emotional and expressive. There is a greater buoyancy, a flare of movement, of quick-kindled passion. Yet the Netherlands as a whole are for the most part quiet, concealing their pleasure or their anger at the theatre with great outward phlegm.

In Norway one is handed a program—free! Nowhere else in Europe—nowhere else, except in America, is one presented with a program of the play. And in Norway are little lights over ledges which form reading desks for programs. Ideal Norway! Here we can quietly listen to the thoughtful Björnsen Björnsen, or to the mighty Ibsen. Here, between acts, we can dine or drink or stroll at ease. Here we are not pursued by our seat attendant for a "pourboire" or "trink-geld." And here the subway does not submerge the climax of the third act nor the "El" muffle the important lines of a play.

Here is no rush, no clatter, no din, no long journey down winding aisles, as in London, no excited gesticulation, no insult on the part of the "program-lady" (to whom our tip has not been sufficient to buy her new silk stockings), as in France.

Here, too, theatre tickets are cheaper—cheaper

than in Paris, London, and, of course, New York. Here are no ticket agents or scalpers. Here one pays a moderate box-office price, which includes everything. Too bad Norway isn't nearer! But then—it might be worse for business on Broadway.

Audiences in Norway have placidity and common sense, but they are not quite so interesting as in Spain, Italy, or Egypt. In these countries the audiences are all actors. They listen, argue, quarrel. One is often more afraid of the murder in the audience than on the stage. "The Spider" would have been no novelty in Egypt, Rome, or Madrid. In all of these places the audiences identify themselves with the play, and "their" play is a matter of vital concern to them. One is prepared for an explosion at any moment. One expects to see the violent gentleman in front jump up on the stage and quarrel with the villain, or murder him! The hissing is so loud in Egypt that one almost cries out for peace. We must restrain ourselves from calling "Won't you please be quiet, and give the author a chance?"

Pirandello has been keen to seize on this quality in Italian audiences. Pirandello could never have developed in the Occident. He has so masterfully intermingled his audiences and his plays that we are all at one with the actors in his dramas. We are swept along with them—all of us unconscious actors.

Gémier also, in Paris, long ago at the "Odeon" wisely included his audiences in his productions. Long ago his "Shylock" crept out of the shadows of a Venice which may have begun in the wings, or on the stage, but which wound down the aisles and into the shadows of the audience.

Nowhere in the world, perhaps, does an audience so live a drama as at the "Comédie Française." Here the little *vendeuse* from any of the shops perishes before our eyes in the top gallery of the old theatre—perishes only to be born again in some classic heroine's woes, or Racine or Molière. Here she sobs and sighs and smiles, oblivious of all the world. Here do the drab doors of her daily prison swing wide to become magic portals to the land of Make-Believe. Here does this divine little actress herself swing into her rightful heritage and merge into the myth of the great dramatist's creation.

No hours are too long to be endured before her entrance into "Fairy Land." In France, as in the pit-queues of England and in the patient crowds in Germany, these mute audiences willingly wait endless, cruel hours, before the Magic Entrance.

If one wants to hear a keen and caustic criticism of the play let him climb to the topmost galleries in France or England or Germany.

In England I quailed before an old 'bus driver,

who, for his twopence, was reveling in Shakespeare. I quailed, because he knew his text far better than the actor, and far, far better than I. The old 'bus driver brought a deep relish and valuation to his "Merchant of Venice." Here was appreciation—and reproach—reproach for my niggardliness of applause, reproach for my cynicism, a mute yet effective reproach for my hardened years of theatre-going.

In the galleries of the world, is the living heart of the audience. Here is the actor's reward—his most devoted friends as well as his keenest critics. Appetites are sharpened here—due to long hours of waiting, due to hours of self-denial, due to weeks of self-abnegation.

If you must go without your dinner to see a play, you will be more critical of it, you will be more enthusiastic if it is great, your memory will function more sharply, and you will lose yourself more gloriously in the Land of Illusion.

If you are a German professor and must do with "ein glass Bier und ein Brötchen" to see your Schiller and your Wagner—they will become more vital to you. They will become active, poignant factors in your life.

In Salzburg I sat next to an old caretaker of a "Schloss" at his beloved "Figaro's Hochzeit." Fortunately for him, the family were on vacation. They

had given him their ticket to the opera. He gloated over the performance as over a banquet. He devoured every note. And he knew every incident of that opera as he knows every incident of Mozart's life. Mozart was a personality to him. He knew every detail of his struggle and his success.

In Germany thought is given to these "poor" audiences. Those who cannot buy programs may read a sample copy where it has been framed and hung on the walls of the theatre, where they are changed daily—just as the front pages of newspapers are pasted up in street corners. This may be bad for the newspaper business, but it certainly must be good for the poor man to whom a "Zeitung" or a program is a luxury.

It is difficult to realize how important a part food plays in the German and Austrian theatres. One virtually eats one's way through an opera. From the rise of the curtain at four P.M. till ten, when it descends, there is ample time for "Kaffee," "Abend-Essen" and "Nacht-Tisch." Does it strain credulity to state that an absorbed German professor and his Frau may bring Wurst and Sauerkraut to the opera? And that the inveterate German theatre-goer searches determinedly for his "Belegtes Brot," which he has certainly tucked into his back pocket? Eating one's way through a play becomes so much a matter of

course that even critical visitors cease to notice, after a time, and become part of the nibbling audience which so thoroughly enjoys program and food.

Audiences in Germany and Austria are sincere. They applaud when they approve. There is no sycophancy about them, and no formality. They may be stonily silent after what seems to us a great performance of "Tristan and Isolde"; but if it has not been great to them, they will file out silently. Yet they may cause the curtain to be raised a dozen times for their Moissi or another favored star. They are true to their favorites.

In the matter of devotion no audience can surpass the English. When one has seen a Sunday night audience stop the raising of the curtain at "The American Tragedy" because Tallulah Bankhead has appeared in the audience, one can never again complain of the coldness of the English. The arrival of Gladys Cooper is a signal for an uproar.

And in cold England galleries boo and hiss unrelentingly. The gallery god is the *real* god of the theatre. When he says "Thumbs down" even the great Shaw plays to a deficit; and his indorsement of "Candida" was the dawn of high noon to G. B. S.

American audiences are the youngest, the most naïve in the world. Perhaps because the theatre is an everyday affair in America. The entire audience

is more casual. Here is no longer the solid line of white shirt fronts, nor the striking contrast between gallery and orchestra. People stroll into the theatre because they have had a good business day or missed the evening train to the suburbs, or lost a baseball bet, or because everybody else goes. The shop girl need not save for a month for her orchestra seat. And her costume seems no different to that of the Park Avenue girl next to her. Her coat may be less costly, but it is just as stylish; and her hosiery is also of the sheerest silk.

Gone is the éclat of "First Nights" in New York. When today anybody can buy a ticket from an enterprising speculator why struggle for the distinction of a "Première"? When nobody bothers about dressing but does exactly as he or she pleases, where is the distinction of a former first night?

Informality of dress in the theatre may be good for the producer, the actor, the theatre owner. It may cause drama to enter more deeply and importantly into our lives. But it causes our audiences to be less distinguished. It causes the theatre to seem less glorious, more commonplace. On the other hand it helps many plays to become our own stories, to open the door more continuously into the problems, the passions, and the glamour of other lives.

Who can prophesy the end? The "everyday"

affair inevitably becomes tarnished, inevitably loses in value. Yet there are those of us who grow by living through the emotions evoked in the theatre.

The raising of a curtain will always be to some of us the lighting of a magic torch of passion, will always cause a thrill, a startled exclamation, will always add reclame to life, and may make the commonplace existence more unendurable.

The magic curtain in lifting may shed a sense of powdered gold-dust—of starlight, moonlight, which dances before us, lighting up the trail to grown-up Fairy-lands!

XXXI: ACTORS

There is no surer method of determining the personality of a nation than through its actors. Intuitively they represent a people. They personify methods of expression, characteristics, moods, repressions. In short, they are the crystallized psychological symbols of their audiences.

The individual actors of a nation remain limned in our memory as distinct and different as the etchings of Whistler and Seymour Haden differ from the lines of Rembrandt or from the haunting portraits of Franz Lenbach.

We can never confuse the carefully timed gestures of Forbes Robertson in England with the effervescence of Sacha Guitry in France. We recall the difference between the violence of Max Pallenberg in Austria and the repression of Alexander Moissi in Berlin.

In England an inhibited group of actors hold the stage. Sounding their depths of passion in repressed intensity they give us a highly individualized and interesting art. Gladys Cooper, Fay Compton, Sybil Thorndike—that most versatile and intellectual of actresses; Gwen Ffrancon Davis, Athene Seyler—

that skilful comedienne, Marie Tempest, Edith Evans, Lady Tree, Gertrude Elliot, Edna Best, and Olga Lindo, of deep but controlled passion, are examples of British temperament. Nicholas Hannen, even in his masterpiece, "The Conquering Hero" tore at our heartstrings, but never burst into unbridled passion. The days of Irving and the violence of Sarah Siddons are gone forever. Modern English actors are ashamed of violence. They fear ridicule —even when most deeply moved; and the subtlety of the exquisite Meggie Albanesi remains a model to be aspired to although she has passed on to her ultimate repression.

In England there are scores of young and clever actors: Owen Nares, who successfully simulates sincerity; Tallulah Bankhead, immensely popular with the masses; Raymond Massey; Claude Rains; Beatrix Thomson; Leon Quartermain; Robert Lorraine; Gerald du Maurier; Ernest Thesiger; and a group of young comedians, such as Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn, whom London adores unendingly.

Yet acting in London—with the outstanding exception of Sybil Thorndike and the now retired Forbes Robertson—never reaches the superb heights of the Continent. Here is no Sacha Guitry—subtle, resourceful, witty, passionate—wearing the mantle of his father, the great Lucien, yet adding the arts

of Producer, Author, and Stage-Director. There are few Guitrys anywhere. Not many like Yvonne Printemps who, with the very spirit of springtime, acts, sings, dances, gesticulates like fragile golden sunlight in a fragrant, old-fashioned garden. Nor are there many companies like that of the Comédie Française—skilled emotionalists with the heritage of Antoine's Théâtre Libre and the memories of the great Molière, Racine and Corneille. You may find them not only in the productions of "L'Avare," "Esther," "Berenice" or "Le Cid," but in the tribute paid by them to the traditions of their "House of Drama."

And Gémier over at the "Odeon" has his school of the theatre—realistic, intense, progressive. Jacques Copeau has transported his young actors from the "Vieux Colombier" to a rustic garden where, from early morning, these young people can react to the impressions of dramatic Nature.

Lügne-Poe at the "Theatre L'Œuvre," with a trace of the Russian, insists on the utmost realism. His aim is Life itself. Insistently he trains and educates. He exhorts continually—and points to Nature as the guide. He abjures romanticism and dwells almost hideously on the intense passions of Mankind.

Pirandello in Italy trains his actors from the reactions of the brain. Dwelling less on beauty and movement, he insists upon the mental visualization

of a character. Once having convinced the actor of his part, he ceases to criticize his movements. Actions may be ugly, according to Pirandello, but they must symbolize character. A rehearsal by this strange gymnast of the theatre is more like an oral interpretation of a difficult lesson in psychology than like a drama.

And in Germany dramatic art still flies like Pegasus. Perfervid, oratorical, at times wildly and stridently bombastic, the art of the average German actor does not attract the Anglo-Saxon critic. Too often we long for the repression of England. Too often our ears ache with terrific exclamations. Too often we long for repose.

Yet under Max Reinhardt a group of German actors have achieved high distinction: Lilli Darvas, the beautiful wife of Molnar, possesses genuine dramatic power; Helene Thimig who plays "Glaube" in "Jedermann" and "Louisa" in "Kabale und Leibe," moves us with her deep sense of tragedy and her quiet realism. Alexander Moissi plays a superb and moving "Everyman," and Wladmir Sokoloff, with his heritage of "The Moscow Art Theatre," persuades us of his brilliant and endless dramatic genius.

In Austria the great Max Pallenberg still roars his way to fame. To those of us who prefer the

quieter methods Pallenberg is ostentatious. Nor does he approach the power, the individual talent, the naïve personality of Emil Jannings, who lately has gone over to Filmdom.

In Norway, as in Belgium and Holland, the actor is quiet and undemonstrative. Yet to see an Ibsen drama done in Oslo by a company of Norwegians who adore their master as much as their fathers once persecuted him, is an experience not soon forgotten. In Holland Jan Fabricius directs silent, almost sullen Dutch actors; and in beautiful Brussels, Herman Teirlinck draws poetry from young Thespians who are just beginning to know their art.

Most fascinating of all are the Russians. We, who have come to recognize their Art as the supreme tribute to Nature, must realize that Stanislavsky and Nemirovich Danchenko have created a still, white trail of enduring genius. Here are men to whom no sacrifice is too great. Here are actors who live and dream, who love and dedicate themselves to their ideal, to whom no travail is a deterrent. Here authors, like Tchekoff or Gorky, live among the players, discussing their creations as living problems should be discussed. Out at Tsarskoe-Selo with Tolstoy, or at Odessa with an aging Tchekov, over a breakfast, perhaps, which lasted for hours—they would sit over the interpretation of a single action.

Actors to whom art is life—whether it be in the rendition of a sick old peasant in "The Cherry Orchard," the madness of "Ivanov," or the desperate soul-story of "The Sea-Gull"—actors who need no other life than that of the spirit—these are the artists who visualize the theatre.

From them even our American "stars" have much to learn. Jane Cowl, Helen Hayes, even the superb Barrymore and Anglin could linger in Moscow or see a rehearsal of "The Kamerny Theatre" and learn much to their advantage.

Yet American acting as a whole is good. By comparison with other nations we have a better general average of actors. Due to the decline of the "Star" system we have had, of recent years, an increase of good character actors, and a general improvement in technique. The bane of the American stage is its insistence on "type" acting. Let a player once play the part of an old man, and, like O. P. Heggie, he is doomed to be aged forever. America needs the Continental repertory systems strewn broadcast over the country. It needs a greater flexibility and interchangeability of method—like Reinhardt's. An actor must learn to play "The Devil" in "Jedermann" one night, and the "Secretary" in "Kabale und Leibe" the next.

Only the Theatre Guild and Eva Le Gallienne at

the Civic Repertory Theatre have been insistent upon Repertory. And the growth of Summer Stock Companies in America gives hope of the rise of younger and more flexible talent. We have a group of brilliant actors who are lending luster to the American stage. Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Clare Eames, Aline MacMahon, Glenn Anders, Leslie Howard, George Jessel, Eliot Cabot, Margalo Gillmore, Robert Keith, Berth Merrill, Lowell Sherman, Paul Robeson, Lillian Foster, Rex Cherryman, Haidee Wright, Dudley Digges, Helen Gahagan, Helen Chandler, Helen Westley, Tom Powers, Blanche Bates, Grace George, Basil Sidney, Mary Ellis, Basil Rathbone, John Gilpin, Clarence Derwent, Ralph Forbes, Nazimova, Mrs. Fiske and others raise us to a plane of considerable glory.

Among the outstanding actors of the day is the inimitable George Arliss, with a perfection of technique, unmatched anywhere. Arliss has all the "polish" of the Englishman and the simple verve of the American. His finesse in "Disraeli," "The Green Goddess," "Old English," and now in the great "Shylock" are unforgettable. Arliss brings to the stage a culture which is unique today. A man steeped in the best traditions of the drama, of literature, with the savoir-faire of the drawing room and the subtlety

of international training. We can undoubtedly call Arliss the leading American actor of our day.

The Barrymores bring various important qualities to the stage. John, so sadly absorbed by the munificent "movies" has done little of note since his sublime "Hamlet." Deeply we may mourn the loss of one who brought a certain princely heroism to theatre-land. It is tragic that a man of such gifts seems to have sold out to the films. One wonders whether his love of drama will ever prove tempting enough to reclaim him. His sister Ethel has done little of recent years to add to her fame. Yet the memory of the "Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Déclassée," and "The Twelve Pound Look" are imperishable. Lionel also seems to be following in the footsteps of John. He too is absorbed by the silver screen. The actor who could give us "The Claw" is a tragic loss to the spoken stage.

Pauline Lord catches our heart-strings with a weird talent that is quite indescribable. Who can appraise this unique genius? An actress of repressions and inhibitions. A genius which leads us to a high-walled garden and then forbids us enter. An actress with the quality of Dusé, with lithe twisting fingers and a voice that suggests and lures. Something of the supernatural there is about Pauline Lord —whose wise eyes seem to see beyond our sphere;

seem to glimpse lands about which we only dream. She is more of the Continental caliber. Ludmilla Pitoeff has much of the same quality. It is what these women do not say more than what they do that is so potent. It is more the etched outline of their suggestions than any tangible art that we receive from them.

In this class also is Katharine Cornell. A young actress, who only a few years ago burst upon an astounded public in an ingénue rôle in "A Bill Of Divorcement." Since then she has run the gamut from the materialist in "The Green Hat" and "The Letter" to the exquisite "Candida" of Bernard Shaw. Miss Cornell has an enormous following. Some say the greatest of any actress in America. In her lithe figure and her intellectual postures one is incessantly intrigued.

One could also include, in this class, but with more positive physical qualities—Judith Anderson, who has done unique mental work in "Behold The Bridegroom" and equally unique physical work in "The Dove"; and Lenore Ulric, whose talents we long to see better employed than in "Lulu Belle," but who seems to be slated to play the part of the passionate negress forever; Jeanne Eagles who has never equalled herself as Sadie Thompson in the eternal "Rain"; Helen Hayes who fascinates multitudes in

"Coquette"; Laurette Taylor, who flutters mentally "In a Garden"; Blanch Yurka, who is too big for "The Squall" yet seems destined to play it for many months; Helen Chandler, who has never equalled her superb Hedvig in "The Wild Duck," and the exquisite Ann Harding, who is deserving of something better than the commonplace Mary Dugan! And Margaret Anglin, who serves the gods of Greece and enriches America with her poetic revival of the "Electra" by Euripides. This actress who has altruistically foresworn material emoluments and dedicated herself to the revival of classic drama and staged them in scenes of superlative beauty.

Yet we have not rivaled Russia whose very soul seems poured into its theatre—the aching, blundering, bewildering soul of Russia. All of its futility and its repression in daily living, all the long and dreary wail of its tragic annals are translated into drama. Perhaps the Russian actors are but symbols of a peace yet to come, when Russia will give the world unstintingly of that Beauty which her people know so well and have so long cherished. Russia is today the world's dramatic teacher—in technique of movement, of color, of harmony. Russia has mastered realism in its inspired and magnificent replica of the thing we call Life.

'PLAYS—PLAYERS—PLAYHOUSES' HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY ROBERT S. JOSEPHY, AND PRINTED UNDER HIS SUPERVISION BY J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK, IN MARCH MCMXXVIII.

OHIO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
1000081690

PN
1861
K7